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# DESIGN RESEARCH

SWEDISH DESIGN RESEARCH JOURNAL SVID, SWEDISH INDUSTRIAL DESIGN FOUNDATION

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DESIGN RESEARCH FOR  
WEIGHTER ARGUMENTS

FOCUS NORWAY

Towards a strategic  
“design agenda”

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#### EDITORIAL STAFF

Eva-Karin Anderman, editor, SVID,  
eva-karin.anderman@svid.se  
Susanne Helgeson  
susanne.helgeson@telia.com  
Lotta Jonson, lotta@lottacontinua.se  
Research editors:  
Stefan Holmlid, stefan.holmlid@liu.se  
Katarina Wetter Edman,  
katarina.w.edman@gri.gu.se

Fenela Childs translated  
the editorial sections.

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#### COVER:

From the Norwegian design research  
project *YOUrban*. A scene from the  
film *Immaterials: WiFi light painting*  
by Timo Arnall, Jørn Knutsen and  
Einar Sneve Martinussen.

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# The art is knowing how to set limits

**M**y first job as a new graduate in politics and economics was to work to simplify regulations and reduce reporting requirements for the private sector. That might sound like a boring occupation but it taught me a lot.

Of course, it was not until recent years that I realised the connections to design. The recent debate over the proposal that companies in Sweden will have to report their statements of earnings and tax deductions once a month instead of once a year – and the rebellion against that – clearly illustrate that design should also play a major role in policy and regulatory contexts. When the user perspective is incorporated right from the start we often achieve totally different solutions than those we first perceived.

The concept of design is constantly being expanded. Today a search on the word ‘design’ gives 35,000 hits in the SWEPUB database, a search engine for scientific publications at Swedish higher educational institutions. It is wonderful that so much funded and published research already exists. But it would be valuable to have interfaces and platforms that made it easier for many people to find and use this knowledge in order to understand and use design as a tool for their own particular platform.

Instead of only focusing on the more or less good ability of academia to disseminate this knowledge, we should start with the assumption that in a society where complex systems must be reformulated into functioning, user-friendly solutions, we need research that can be used at more stages and in more disciplines than those for which it was first produced. This would presumably lead to new proposals for the transmission of technology and knowledge than those we see today.

Developing solutions that meet future needs requires cultures of innovation in which service providers and design research are important catalysts for converting knowledge and research into real solutions. When design is regarded as a cornerstone of all innovation work – in both the private and public sectors – then we improve the conditions for Sweden to become a nation that takes design seriously and acts accordingly.

It is not hard not to do something; what is hard is to do the right thing – to solve the right problem and ask the right questions. What is hard is to take something that is difficult and make it easy, to make complex situations function problem free. Or, as the head of my regulation simplification agency would have said: “The art is knowing how to set limits.”

*Eva-Karin Anderman, Program Director, Swedish Industrial Design Foundation (SVID)*



Eva-Karin Anderman

PHOTO: CAROLINE LUNDEN-WELDEN

# Norwegian optimism about the future of design research

Norwegian design is about spectacular construction projects set in stunning landscapes along tourist routes. And Norwegian R&D projects are about offshore oil platforms. At least, that's what many people believe. But that is not at all the case; Norwegian design is broader than that. In addition, design research has gained a strong foothold within the university-level design schools and become better known among decision makers at various levels.

"Despite this, design research still has trouble achieving visibility, not least because the concept itself is so tricky to define. We're constantly competing with other, better demarcated disciplines for funding," comments Andrew Morrison.

He is professor of interdisciplinary design at the Institute for Design at the Oslo School of Architecture and Design (AHO) in Oslo and is one of the people who have built up one of the School's four research centres, the Centre for Design Research (DR). This has been a huge task on a number of levels; not least, it has involved developing communications with the outside world via articles, publications and a website. Morrison also has the overall responsibility for supervising the many different design research projects at AHO.

There is no overall national plan for design research in Norway, explains *Petter Øyan*, dean of the faculty of technology, art and design at Oslo and Akershus University College of Applied Sciences, in the Danish online design research journal *Mind Design*. Instead, Norwegian design research has developed out of real needs. This

aspect makes the research environment in Norway strong, Øyan says. The design schools can themselves choose the main focus of their research, and this in turn helps to shape the schools' individual identities: "The schools choose their own identity that they can stand behind and that is a bit different than the others' – which is a really good thing."

## SIX FULL-TIME EMPLOYEES

AHO trains architects, landscape architects and industrial designers. The terms of reference for AHO's Centre for Design Research state that it encompasses "practice based and inquiry centred research that draws on design processes and products and supports and crosses demarcations between products and services, industrial and interaction design." The School's three other research centres focus on architecture, urban planning and critical design studies.

The Centre for Design Research has about fifty design researchers, who include the dozen or so doctoral students supervised by Andrew Morrison. Six of the design researchers are employed full time, three have been brought in

from outside on contracts and the others participate for shorter or longer periods in various projects funded in various ways. The researchers at the Centre for Design Research are often professionally active designers with no teaching commitments.

Andrew Morrison's own background is rather different from that of most design researchers. He began studying literature in his home country of Botswana, did a master's in linguistics at Edinburgh, and then switched to communication issues and digital media. He then came to Norway and submitted his doctoral thesis at the department which focused on new media at the University of Oslo. His lack of a standard design education has both advantages and disadvantages.

"I understand to some extent people who argue that a person must have studied design in order to supervise design research. On the other hand, design research requires a staff of individuals from a variety of disciplines. My humanist training has all-round value. I've also done practical work with both graphic design and interaction design. I've learned a design approach and design methodology by

taking the long, practical route.”

People with varying forms of expertise are attached to all the research projects at the Centre for Design Research. These individuals must also complement each other in terms of their age and experience. Morrison believes this is extremely important, particularly for research into service design.

“In our major offshore project we’ve brought in interaction designers and HR specialists. In another project, which is about social media and the urban environment, we’ve used an architect and people who work with narrative techniques and interactivity. And in some cases we’re collaborating with the Bergen School of Business (BSB).”

*Rachel Troye* is the head and pro-rector of the Institute of Design

at AHO and has led various interdisciplinary projects at the institute. She also stresses the importance of having external contacts both with other educational institutions and with industry.

“Sometimes critics argue that the design field has become too broad but I believe this breadth is necessary,” she says.

“Society is making new demands and we must respond to them in design research too. At the same time, we must not lose the basics, namely design itself and an understanding of various aesthetic aspects.”

#### VARIOUS SPECIALITIES

Design research at AHO’s Centre for Design Research thus spans a range of fields from technology, innovation and economics to social issues. At one end of the spectrum is an ongoing, exten-

sive maritime post-doctoral project. At the other end is a small student project on sexual harassment. However, one increasing focus is service- and interaction design.

The Centre has about 50 research projects, which are organised by theme: culture, ecology, the future, interaction, services, systems and objects. The projects can both overlap and involve cooperation, can vary in size, and can involve anything from just one researcher to a multi-member team.

Another design researcher at AHO, *Håkan Edeholdt*, specialises in ecology. He wants to see the AHO become a driving force in sustainability research. This spring he travelled around the world, in part to tell people about a project called “2-Sustainia”. This pilot study aims to stimulate more international cooperation on sustainable

## Design education programmes and design research institutions

Norwegian design research has a tripartite foundation: the colleges, universities and art schools. These institutions divide up the design research work between themselves so they do not have identical focuses. The public higher education institutions offering design programmes are: the Oslo School of Architecture and Design (AHO), the Norwegian University of Science and Technology (NTNU) in Trondheim, Bergen Academy of Art and Design in Bergen, and Oslo National Academy of the Arts. Only NTNU and AHO offer doctoral programmes but they can also supervise doctoral students from the two other institutions.

AHO has a total of about 650 students. Each year 25 students are admitted to AHO’s Institute of Design. The PhD programme encompasses some 40 doctoral students at four different institutes: the Institute of Architecture, the Institute of Urbanism and Landscape, the Institute of Design and the Institute of Form, Theory and History. AHO also has its own research school offering a one-year programme. Each institute has its own research centre (the Research Centre for Urban Studies, the Centre for

Design Research and the Center (sic) for Architecture and Tectonics (RCAT), the Oslo Centre for Critical Architectural Studies (OCCAS). The research is externally funded.

The Norwegian University of Science and Technology (NTNU) in Trondheim also trains industrial designers. The programme comes under the heading of “civil engineering and architectural education”. Design research has gained increasing prominence at the university but purely technological projects still dominate.

Oslo and Akershus University College of Applied Sciences (HIOA), trains designers, among others. The college’s Health, Care and Welfare (HOV) programme is one of its prioritised research fields.

Bergen Academy of Art and Design has a special scholarship programme for students to do artistic R&D work for three years. The programme includes both theory and practice and can lead to a doctorate.

## From off shore ...

### Ulstein Bridge Vision Ulstein Bridge Concept

Project leader: Kjetil Nordby

The Ulstein Group builds sophisticated ships, including some used in the oil industry. Over the years these ships have been given more and more high-tech systems, which have not been able to communicate between themselves. Many problems occurred and something had to be done. After a meeting between industrial designers at AHO and the company, design researcher Kjetil Nordby applied for funding to survey the Norwegian Design Council's Design-driven Innovation Programme (DIP) funds. The aim was to develop possible future scenarios for ships that would support oil platforms, be out at sea for long periods,

be capable of performing repairs underwater, and more.

The end result was so successful that the project has morphed into a new three-year research project. The aim is now to further develop the first vision. The Research Council of Norway is financing half the project with the sum of NOK 10 million drawn from a fund that gives money for technology and innovation. The Ulstein Group is contributing the same amount. This is the first time that the company is investing in design development; previously it only developed technology.

"A ship is like a floating factory at sea," Nordby explains. "The living conditions on board are tough and can sometimes be a matter of life or death. The crew's task includes steering submarines, moving cables

underwater, and transferring large objects to platforms in rough seas. People also have to live here for long periods. Our research work has focused on everything from furniture design and linking various information systems to each other, to developing good ergonomic workplaces that can function well even in rough seas. Or designing the interactive design environment and developing new software."

A ship's wheelhouse or bridge can contain up to 35 different separate technological systems, each of which is complex and handles technology that can endanger life. The aim is to shape all this into a whole: a physical vision based on system-oriented design, Nordby says.

The Ulstein projects have also included a number of studies, interviews



ILLUSTRATION: ARKITEKTUR- OG DESIGNHOGSKOLEN I OSLO

and surveys of conditions on board the ships. Workshops have been held and a ship simulator in laboratory format has been built at AHO.

At the start of 2013 the vision project won the Norwegian bank DnB's innovation prize (worth NOK 200,000) for the best business concept in Norway's Vestlandet region (the company's head office is in Ålesund) in competition with 98 other projects. In the final in Trondheim in March the project was selected as the best in all of Norway. The NOK 1 million prize money will go to continued design R&D. The film made to present the vision helped contribute to the project's success. The film can still be seen at: [www.designresearch.no/projects/ulstein-bridge-concept/news?post\\_id=2762](http://www.designresearch.no/projects/ulstein-bridge-concept/news?post_id=2762)



development from a design research perspective.

In contrast, *Kjetil Nordby* regards “his” ocean projects as parts of a maritime strategy at AHO. He did his master’s degree at Umeå Institute of Design, Umeå University in Sweden and then his doctorate at AHO. He is now one of AHO’s full-time design researchers.

In his research projects, an entire staff works on design issues at the interface between technology and innovation. The reason the projects exist at all is the result of political decisions transmitted via the Research Council of Norway. The politicians want to invest in links between industry, innovation work and academia.

#### WHAT’S SECRET?

This type of project involves a continual debate on openness and secrecy. What can be presented publicly? What is secret? As a researcher, Nordby wants to keep everything public as far as possible.

“For me, research is very much about learning from the design process itself,” he says. “That’s at least as important to us design researchers as publishing results. To get to an end result we pass through many important stages. If these are well documented then we don’t have to repeat the same mistakes, for example. It’s a matter of deepening our knowledge.”

In his case, he says, his collaboration with the Ulstein Group has given the design researchers the practical resources with which to drive innovation. They have gained undreamt-of opportunities to work with technology companies from around the world.

“Industry has become more interested in industrial design,” he explains. “For example, we’ve had the opportunity to learn more about

Norwegian industry and the offshore sector. Previously, it was always very difficult to gain access to ships and oil and offshore platforms.”

Just over a year now remains in phase two of the Ulstein project. AHO and Kjetil Nordby are eager to keep working on offshore design and have already developed new contacts with other companies.

#### NO FIXED RULES

Back to Andrew Morrison’s more general thoughts about the field of design research. He says it is not possible to formulate any definitive rules for how to work on design research projects. However, such projects should always be interdisciplinary – which in turn involves some risks. When people with varying forms of expertise are brought together they can lose focus, get sidetracked, and need to take several steps back to return to the initial set of issues. Collaboration can be complicated. Researchers must then be open and not just defend their own field of expertise, Morrison says.

“My job is often to get the design researchers to look at the bigger picture. Professional designers who start doing research may not always have an academic background. Some of them lack theoretical knowledge in cultural or art history. They can sometimes have difficulty seeing more complex social patterns, which they must know about if they want to change people’s behaviour, for instance in regard to new services or service functions. My task is to develop the analytical ability of the design researchers connected with AHO. Because that can vary greatly.”

It is thus important that design research does not wall itself into any particular compartment. The complexity is partly what makes this such



“Design research could be seen as an interdisciplinary and reflexive move between making and reflecting. It has a practical knowledge, mixed competences and a need to make clear how those can be brought forward through some analytical conceptual operators. And it is something that also needs to be situated in the society.... And it is emerging, it is not fixed in the sense that designers have this reach whether it's for a better kind of world or whether it's an improved tool or

whether it's for speculating to try to find out how to find out. Together these all have to sort of brush up against each other to find some kind of originality in a way and at the same time be accessible to people who are users and consumers.” The concept of “design research” according to Andrew Morrison.”

*Begreppet "designforskning" enligt  
Andrew Morrison.*



a fascinating field – one that Morrison says cannot be configured.

The point is that design research must be differentiated and not just use any specific, predetermined research model. Yes, researchers always start with a design methodology but how their research then progresses cannot be decided in advance.

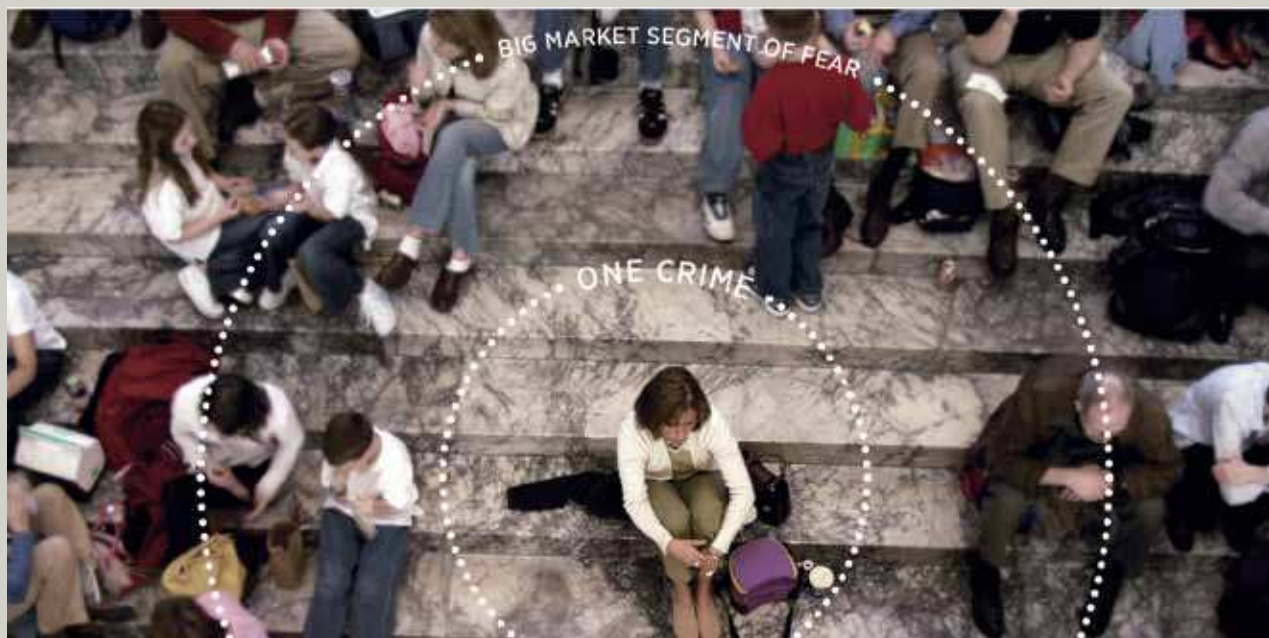
#### USER-DRIVEN IN NORWAY TOO

Just as in other countries, design research in Norway now has a slightly different focus than before. The concept of user-driven design research is far more common nowadays than it was a few years ago in Norway too. But as early as the second half of the 20th century, people in fields such as ergonomic design were talking about users and user-friendly solutions. So what's the difference?

Andrew Morrison says today's situation is completely different. Large and important functions that play a key role in society must be adapted to suit their users. The public sector must be redesigned for people with a wide variety of needs. This necessitates the development of service design and user involvement in all types of design

### Andrew Morrison

leads and takes part in a range of projects at AHO's Centre for Design Research. Fields of interest: communication design, dynamic interfaces and social media, RFID, service design, electronic arts installations, practice-based research/research by design and online research mediation. Morrison says an important task of design researchers is to disseminate their results and inform people about them.



## ... to protecting women

### Designing for Dignity

Designer: Manuela Aguirre Ulloa and Jan Kristian Strømsnes

The Designing for Dignity project examined social issues in the public sector. The focus was on the reception and care of sexual assault victims. The project has received great attention outside AHO and is currently nominated for the largest international design prize, INDEX, in the Body category. This “competition” will be decided later this year but the nomination alone is a mark of success. The project included a survey of how the police and medical agencies dealt with female rape victims. The focus lay on the women’s narratives and experiences.

Workshops were used to identify certain traumatic situations and, based on the various studies, suggestions were made for concrete solutions to particularly traumatic

events. One such solution involved using less traumatic ways to gather any possible DNA traces of the perpetrator. A soft blanket and pillow replaced paper gloves. Designing for Dignity also presented a range of interior decoration suggestions and ideas for other routines

– all with the aim of creating a more humane environment. The project also produced a total of three conceptual solutions. They included a guide to how to build a worthy ‘centre’ for sexual assault victims. [www.designingfordignity.com](http://www.designingfordignity.com)



PHOTO: ARKITEKTUR- OG DESIGNHØGSKOLEN I OSLO



## More projects at AHO

### YOURban

Project leader: **Andrew Morrison**

YOURban revolves around the design of social media. Tools and methods to encourage involvement are explored, as is the feeling of participation and responsibility for our physical, social and cultural world. YOURban not only showcases the



Above: This is where the equipment is made that will be used to create a visual representation of WiFi-technology. Below: A scene from the film *Immaterials: WiFi light painting* made by Timo Arnall, Jørn Knutsen and Einar Sneve Martinussen.

fascinating side of technology but also questions its possibilities and shows its risks. Some of the questions are: Can social media help to improve the environment? To change the power structures? To transform our urban environment to greater participation?

Last year Norsk Form and the Norwegian newspaper *Dagbladet* announced a competition called *Design 2020*. The task was to write an article on "What role can design and the designer play in society?" The winners were two design researchers from the YOURban project, Einar Sneve Martinussen and Jørn Knutsen. Here is an excerpt of their winning text, which was entitled "Designing a digital future":

"In the field of design we regard digital technology as a material just like wood, metal and plastic, that is, as something which can be formed. Today we are seeing the emergence of a new field of design that works specifically with how we interact with technological systems and services [---] At stake are not only purely aesthetic

issues – what interfaces and websites look like – but also increasingly how these can be shaped into something that is experienced and becomes part of everyday life."

The picture shows how WiFi waves travel through a city district and how this invisible communications tool fluctuates from second to second. We now regard WiFi waves as being a totally normal part of life, and many of us have become dependent on them.

Part of the project, the film *Immaterials: WiFi light painting* has been downloaded millions of times. The film concretised in a very artistic way an imaginary reality. The film was created by Martinussen and Knutsen together with another design researcher at AHO, Timo Arnall, who is the creative director of the Berg design agency London. Arnall's own research project, *Touch*, focuses on developing and explaining new technology. Watch the film at: <http://yourban.no/2012/06/01/visualising-wifi-for-the-masses/> More at: [yourban.no](http://yourban.no)



PHOTO: TIMO ARNALL, EINAR SNEVE MARTINUSSEN, JØRN KNUTSEN



**Ocean of light**  
Project leader: **Anthony Rowe**

Ocean of Light (above) is based on previous experiments with computer technology and light-emitting diodes. The aim is to explore both the creative and artistic potential of various types of technological systems, for example in order to use them in interactive public-sector art projects.

More at: [www.squidsoup.org](http://www.squidsoup.org)



**Rhyme**  
Project leader: **Birgitta Cappelen**

The aim of Rhyme (below) is to improve the health and quality of life of people with serious functional impairments. Interactive "co-creative tangibles" can be used to communicate with these individuals and motivate them to cooperate. It is hoped that Rhyme will find methods to reduce passivity and isolation and strengthen health and well-being. Parts of the project have been done in cooperation with the Swedish School of Textiles at the University of Borås. More at: [rhyme.no](http://rhyme.no)

## Communicating Movement

Project leader: **Lise Amy Hansen**

Communicating Movement (at right) is about seeing and using physical movement as a design material in an exploratory design process based on interaction techniques. The project is interdisciplinary and moves between digital technology, performance art and communication.

More at: [kinetically.wordpress.com](http://kinetically.wordpress.com)



In the future we will use our entire body, not just our fingertips, to control digital tools. Communicating Movement surveys and plots movements so they can be further analysed (above).

research projects. That said, Morrison can also perceive a danger in this context.

"If we concentrate on the users and their usage instead of on the design itself, the communicative aspects can be overshadowed, especially when new technology is involved. So we must determine the relationship between all the different components. Accordingly, in user-driven projects we examine not only the functional solutions but also more culturally determined aspects. What are we doing with the technology and what is the technology doing with us?"

Some of the AHO projects that have dealt with such topics as RFID technology have therefore not focused on users at all but have rather concentrated solely on an emerging technology which designers actually have no idea how to make useful. RFID involves a "material" that is invisible. (Radio Frequency Identification is a technology used to read information at a distance and is used on bus passes, ski lift passes, pay stations, passports, anti-theft devices, booking systems, libraries etc.)

An example of a more technological project that also has a behavioural focus is called Communicating Movement. Lise Amy Hansen, a graphic designer with her own business in London, is examining movement as a material and how it might be used for various design solutions. Another project, YOURban, which among other things has made WiFi wave movements visible, also contains quite a lot of criticism of technology.

## MUST STAND ON THEIR OWN TWO FEET

Much of Andrew Morrison's work involves applying for funding. Norway has state-funded research programmes



## The Research Council of Norway

The Research Council of Norway has five divisions. One of them is the Division for Innovation, which offers a tax deduction scheme called SkatteFUNN. This can be used to fund certain design research projects if they can be categorised as “user-driven innovation”. The regulations state that the innovation projects should strengthen a company’s international competitiveness. The project funding is shared between the public and private sectors. The Research Council’s own funding comes primarily from the Norwegian Ministry of Trade and Industry and the Ministry of Education and Research. As in Sweden, it is hard to determine how much of the total research budget goes to design research because the design

research field is split among many different academic disciplines. (See further the next double-page spread for design research funding conveyed via the Norwegian Design Council and Norsk Form (the Foundation for Design and Architecture in Norway).)

FORMakademisk is the name of an online journal available to everyone interested in design research. FORMakademisk discusses everything from “industrial design, visual communications, interaction design, architecture, landscape architecture and urban planning as well as design education from kindergarten to the doctoral level”. FORMakademisk had its five-year anniversary in 2012,

receives funding from the Research Council of Norway and publishes two issues per year.

Download from [www.formakademisk.org](http://www.formakademisk.org).



for the fields of culture and media, new technology and so on, but no distinct ‘home’ for design research. A small part of the Research Council of Norway’s funds is distributed via the Norwegian Design Council but on the whole, design researchers must compete for funding by chiselling their way in between other, more clearly defined research fields. The researchers must fine-tune their funding applications to make them appeal to each individual source of funding.

“But I look at this in a wider context, as part of a strategy to make design research more and more important,” Morrison explains. “As a design researcher you must learn to formulate and present an argument and to hone your ability to express yourself. Online, at conferences, in articles in various publications, in blogs, and so on. And, not least, when it comes to applying for money. Doctoral students must be able to stand on their

own two feet, and know how to make their results visible and useable to more people. The actual design of this work can itself help to acquire funding for further research.”

Design research has a lot to do with mapping out complex problems within a broader context, and is often about how system changes can be implemented. These are difficult and complex sets of problems, and not easily solved.

“Design research demands all kinds of sensitivity, curiosity, and thinking about how things are all connected,” Morrison explains. “We talk a lot, do masses of sketches, make mock-ups, organise research seminars every second week, and try to build up a small society of researchers around our research centres.

“I believe we must bring together designers and design researchers – make them feel that they have things in common. But of course it’s also important to expand the circles and

also make our activities known outside the world of design. In recent times a lot has actually happened in this regard here in Norway.

“I’m quite optimistic about the future. We’re being asked more and more to disseminate our results more publicly. At AHO we have both the tools and knowledge to do this: it’s interaction in practice. We have made our results visible and have a media strategy to make ourselves better known. If we show people what we’re doing, then we’ll automatically get more funding. That’s the key to the future.”

*Lotta Jonson*

# Supporting design research – each in its own way

Norsk Form (the Foundation for Design and Architecture in Norway) and the Norwegian Design Council have been the two most important organisations in the design sector in Norway for a long time now. Together they own the DogA design centre with its fabulous premises in central Oslo. The Norwegian government has just announced that the two organisations are to become one – under the name DogA.

DogA is located in a complex of buildings at Ankertorget and Jacob kirke in Oslo. The centre's English name is the Norwegian Centre for Design and Architecture. At one end, a century-old transformer station now houses exhibition and conference facilities. At the other end, the old industrial building is joined to a functional-style brick building. Here is a restaurant facing a park and here the Norwegian Design Council has its office on the upper floor whilst Norsk Form is one level down. Together these two organisations launched DogA, which opened at the beginning of 2005. From having had separate locations, Norsk Form and the Norwegian Design Council were united under one roof.

Slightly strange, I thought during my visit – why not unite them completely? But this continued separation is due to deep historical roots partly to do with funding. Norsk Form gets its money from the Norwegian Ministry of Culture whilst the Norwegian Design Council is funded by and reports to the Ministry of Trade and Industry.

But just as this magazine was to go to press the two ministries made

the announcement: From 1 January 2014 the two design organisations will become a new foundation: the Norwegian Centre for Design and Architecture. Exactly what this will be like is still unknown but the situation so far is as follows.

Norsk Form has officially been “an information- and project-based institution that serves as an arena for interdisciplinary studies, innovation, debate and network-building in the fields of design, architecture and urban area planning.”

Further, it is stated that Norsk Form aims to draw attention to and improve understanding of the importance of design and architecture via exhibitions, publications, conferences, study tours, award ceremonies, competitions, workshops for children and adolescents and media initiatives. The target groups are professionally active individuals in the design and architecture sector, public sector authorities, schools, the private sector, and the general public.

The Norwegian Design Council was established in 1963 as a foundation by the Confederation of Norwegian Enterprise (NHO) (now the Federation

of Norwegian Industries) and the Norwegian Export Council (now Innovation Norway) and thus turns 50 this year. The Council is celebrating with an extra thick yearbook in conjunction with the awarding of the Council's design prize, Award for Design Excellence. The Council says the award has been an important incentive for increasing design awareness in Norway.

The Norwegian Design Council's job has been to promote “the use



Leif Verdu-Isachsen, Norsk Form.

PHOTO: LOTTJA JONSON



PHOTO: ERIK FØRDE/DOGA



PHOTO: JEROEN VERRECH/DOGA



PHOTO: MEDVIND/DOGA



PHOTO: KNUD BRY/DOGA

DogA is the centre for design in Oslo. Here are offices, conference facilities and lots of room for various types of exhibition. Plus a shop selling design objects. Soon DogA will also be the name of a single design organisation that will build bridges and work towards both cultural and trade goals, says the Norwegian government.

of design as a strategic tool for innovation, in order to achieve greater creation of value in Norwegian trade and industry.” This was done via such means as a consultancy service and various events in close collaboration with the Norwegian government’s business and tourism promotional organisation, Innovation Norway.

Officially, then, it is completely clear what each of these two design organisations has had as its tasks. However, when it comes to design

research, their areas of operation have bordered on each other.

#### FOCUS ON HEALTH

*Leif Verdu-Isachsen* is head of design at Norsk Form and is thereby also in charge of the design research supported by the organisation. More and more of Norsk Form’s resources are being focused on services. The project topics have been between the fields of architecture and design, for example, urban planning and the

design of public spaces. In recent years, the government funding which Norsk Form distributes via the annual National Design Competition has gone to the health care sector. The latest topic, this spring, was “Design, the schools and health”.

“One of our jobs is to invite design agencies and design researchers to take part in various publicly funded competitions,” explains Verdu-Isachsen. “So this spring the focus was on the schools. Statistics show that thirty



percent of all students in Norwegian schools have difficulty keeping up and they leave school early. A lot of this is due to health-related problems. The latest design competition involved developing design solutions based on the students' own needs. This involved developing pilot projects together with the school health service in a municipality. We have received many good proposals: service design concepts that could be implemented and perhaps serve as models for more concepts and areas of application."

In this case the competition is being funded by the Ministry of Health and Care Services, the Directorate for Health and Social Affairs (subordinate to the Ministry) and Buskerud County. The award is worth NOK 750,000. The winner could also attract many more commissions like ripples on a pond. Previous similar competitions have attracted up to 50 design agencies. Verdu-Isachsen says this clearly shows that in Norway, too, there is a lot of interest in and knowledge about service design.

"Another current project here is part of the international 'Design without Borders' campaign. We are running our project together with the aid and peace organisations the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (Norad) and FK Norway respectively, plus UNICEF and local organisations in Uganda.

Design without Borders aims to create good, reasonable solutions to various types of problems. The intention is to stimulate local production. During 2013 two subprojects are being run in Uganda. One is the design of a cash transfer system; the other is developing computers for young people.

Verdu-Isachsen trained as an industrial designer and has extensive experience as a project manager both in Norway and abroad. One topic he has worked with for a long time is user-centred design.

#### DIP AS MEDICINE

*Skule Storheill*, who is in charge of R&D at the Norwegian Design

Council, has a somewhat different background. He is a business administration graduate but has been working at the Council for eight years, above all with activities to promote innovation.

"My major task is to convey knowledge about design to the private sector and try to persuade companies to use design more, for instance in innovative pilot projects. My dream is to set up a design research centre where we could accumulate all the knowledge about design. We would invite industry there. This is because design research is not just of academic interest. We have to build bridges between the academic and practical worlds in Norway too." Storheill says that investments in research have not increased noticeably in the past decade. Research has largely been far too technology driven and focused on such sectors as the oil industry. The debate on research funding has now changed to focus more on the question: "What is the money being used for?" Many social issues need to be reviewed and renewed. Norway's private sector must become more competitive and the public sector must become more efficient.

"We're facing a real social challenge because we have to include everyone – all the users. And for health issues, all the patients – otherwise it won't work."

Norway is not high ranking in the international statistics on innovation, Storheill says.

"Only eleven percent of Norwegian companies have launched a new product or service within the past three years. Those are very bad figures. Our medicine is DIP – it works!"

DIP stands for Design-driven Innovation Programme. The programme provides financial support



PHOTO: JOHNNY SYVERSEN/NORSK DESIGNRÅD

The Norwegian Design Council celebrates its fiftieth anniversary this year. A large banquet was held on Design Day in April.



to the private and public sectors to initiate pilot projects in which strategic design is used as an innovation tool in the early concept development stage. The money comes from the Ministry of Trade and Industry and is part of the Norwegian government's increased



Skule Storheill is in charge of R&D at the Norwegian Design Council.

investment in innovation-promoting measures. The Norwegian Design Council developed the programme and is running it together with Innovation Norway and the Research Council of Norway.

"Design is no longer merely whether to choose red or green," Storheill says. "The organisations and companies now applying for DIP funding come from ninety different industries, including the health care sector and a number of service companies. Very soon it will be possible to further disseminate the collective research experience from these pilot projects and to interest even more people in design expertise. DIP regulations state that the knowledge developed in the concept development stage must always be documented. Publicising the concepts is important from a marketing perspective, both for design research as a whole and for the Norwegian Design Council as an organisation."

#### MORE SERVICE DESIGN

In the immediate future 80 to 90 DIP projects will get underway, most in the public sector. They include 10 to 12 health projects. One involves reducing wait times for people with breast cancer and is being run together with Oslo University Hospital. Currently it can take up to 20 weeks between a diagnosis and initial treatment. The aim is to reduce this by 75 percent. The project is scheduled to conclude this autumn and the Ministry of Health and Care Services has expressed an interest in it.

Both the Norwegian Design Council and Norsk Form are thus interested in health issues and service design. The desire to design better services for more people is very much in the spirit of today's times.

*Lotta Jonson*

## Now ...

The Norwegian Design Council  
The main funding of NOK 38 million comes from the Ministry of Trade and Industry and the Research Council of Norway. NOK 10 million is earmarked for DIP (Design-driven Innovation Programme), which has been operating since 2009. The EU Commission has shown an interest in the DIP project. Skule Storheill says it would be a dream come true if the EU were to make DIP a model for Europe. In all, about 500 companies have applied for a total of approx. NOK 220 million. No. of employees: 18  
[www.norskdesign.no](http://www.norskdesign.no)

Norsk Form  
State funding from the Ministry of Culture is NOK 32 million  
Total budget for 2013: NOK 42 million  
No. of employees: 28  
[www.norskform.no](http://www.norskform.no)

DogA  
Intended as a 'house of design' in Oslo. Curates exhibitions, operates a design shop, and rents out premises for conferences, seminars etc. Owned by Norsk Form and the Norwegian Design Council. Current and planned programme at [www.doga.no](http://www.doga.no).

## ... and then

The Norwegian Centre for Design and Architecture = DogA  
Will "promote the understanding, knowledge and use of design and architecture from a commercial and social perspective" and "promote quality and innovation with the aid of design and architecture for the development of environments, products and services".

"Good design and architecture may help solve important challenges in society. I believe that working closer together within these professions will lead to renewed strength," says Minister of Culture, *Hadia Tajik* about the future DogA.

# WEIGHTER ARGUMENTS

Working in the private sector provides another perspective on one's own research and gives an opportunity to discuss research ideas with other non-academic professionals, says Sara Ljungblad, design researcher at Lots. She also believes that her new colleagues now have a better appreciation of what research can contribute, including adding weight to points of view expressed in a variety of discussions.

Lots, an industrial design agency that works on strategic design for innovation, wanted to know how the development of the consumer market affects expectations of products and services within and for working life. With this proposal they applied for an in-house researcher via the Flexit Programme.

The names of three suitable researchers were suggested and the choice fell on *Sara Ljungblad*, who in 2008 completed her doctorate entitled "Beyond Users: Grounding Technology in Experience". Her research field of human-machine interaction focuses on understanding how users experience various interactive products and services and how the design process affects that experience. This research field has gone from focusing on the useability of machines and computers to concentrating on the experiences of the user situation and exploring what new types of mobile services, robots and so on mean for everyday life.

"Previously I have been involved in research projects that focused on exploring services and people's interaction with new technology, for example understanding how people can experience the use of robots within the health care sector. But what has always fascinated me is how

human interests other than driving the development of technology itself ought to influence future products and services."

## THE UNIQUE ASPECT TO SERVICE DESIGN

Ljungblad says the projects at Lots take a social perspective and demonstrate a clear interest in human motivators. For example, one project focuses on designing for mealtimes for people with reduced mobility in their hands and arms. The design perspective and focus are on the meal as a forum for enjoyment and social interaction, rather than primarily as a way to acquire nutrition.

"This is one of our current projects in which we research how those of us involved in the design process create conditions for the users' experience. The next step will be designing for the laid table. The process will involve people with functional impairments as co-creators in setting the agenda for how we can eat together based on their situation. We are doing this in collaboration with others such as the HDK School of Design and Crafts at the University of Gothenburg."

Ljungblad began working at Lots in 2011 and so far has done one of her three years under the Flexit programme

plus taking a break for maternity leave.

Asked how her presence at the agency is influencing the design process and results, she says that the Lots designers have gained new perspectives on how they are working with design and also more understanding of what research is and how it is done.

## GREATER PERSPECTIVE

Another project in which Ljungblad has been involved is a bicycle system for the city of Copenhagen. She subsequently wrote a research article and encouraged the designers at Lots to consider in their daily work how they are working with service design and what it involves for them in their role as designers.

"My role in this service design project was first as a designer colleague working on the project," she explains. "I took part in the design work to visualise the user experience via personas and use cases, which functioned as examples of users and how they used the system. After the project I wrote an article about our experiences for the EAD conference on Crafting the Future."

The article was about practical design work and how designers involved in the process did not realise that service design was something



Above: Sara Ljungblad with Irène Stewart Claesson, CEO of Lots.  
Right, opposite page: Researchers and designers work together in a current project.

unique. Instead, the lead designer described all design challenges as unique. The designers believed that as with any design commission, the job involves finding the method best suited to the challenge at hand. Academia, however, is striving to discover what is unique about service design and to describe the special methods it

involves. For example, the designer develops specific tools to use in such a process in order to materialise and visualise a large system.

“I have gained a far greater perspective on my research by, for instance, being involved in various commissions and tossing about research ideas with people other than researchers,” Ljungblad says. “We’ve begun having research lunches as a way of having brief daily discussions and observations, and contributing input

to research articles. At the moment we’re discussing the significance of the concept of the design object.”

#### NEW TERMINOLOGY

At the time of writing, Ljungblad is writing a report on the user studies she recently did in the United States for a client in the medical technology field. The above-mentioned article which she and her colleagues are writing, plus one she is writing alone, will also be finished. Soon she will meet with other

Flexit researchers and attend a seminar at the University of Gothenburg.

“In my day-to-day work at Lots Design I’m constantly getting ideas about things that could be developed as topics for interesting design research. That’s why practical experience is so important, and Flexit has been fantastic at giving me the opportunity to explore this role,” she emphasises. Asked what she believes her colleagues at Lots have learned from her, she believes that their discussions on topics like service design have been useful and that they now have more knowledge of how research can be linked to concrete projects.

“But you’ll have to ask them about that!”

#### A WORTHY MODEL

The founder and CEO of Lots, *Irène Stewart Claesson*, says Ljungblad has contributed both new terminology and a greater stringency to the discussions about what are new knowledge and relevant methods when doing design work.

“Her network of contacts and her new perspectives on our work are also both useful and informative, both when she participates as a researcher and as ‘one of us’. This collaboration is particularly valuable for us because we’re at the forefront of the strong development now occurring within the design industry and among our clients, where the connection between practical work and research is becoming more and more important.”

Stewart Claesson says the Flexit initiative is a model worthy of imitation because it enables what is a necessary understanding of each other’s field of work.

“The research is also benefiting our clients. Many of them are in a strong development phase and need new

## More Flexit positions this autumn

The Flexit Post-Doctoral Programme of Sweden’s Riksbankens Jubileumsfond, which allows researchers to gain practical work experience in a non-academic environment, has so far been greatly appreciated. The aim of Flexit is to build bridges between academia and the private sector by encouraging companies to hire researchers in the humanities and social sciences. Flexit funds three-quarters of the salary costs. The programme currently funds nine researchers. Two of them are working at design agencies and have a strong focus on design research. In 2012 recruitment to the Flexit programme had to be cancelled due to the many layoff notices issued by Swedish industry. Instead, an evaluation of the programme was brought forward. Project manager *Maria Wikse* hopes to announce more Flexit research positions this autumn, including at [www.rj.se](http://www.rj.se).

perspectives on how to create value so they can respond to today’s rapid changes and social needs.”

She also talks about the importance of contributing to knowledge development that involves starting from the individual and his/her needs, both in industry and in community organisations. Mankind is undergoing a paradigm shift that very much

involves using social innovations to create the conditions for a sustainable future.

“A paradigm shift to which design can make a huge contribution. So it’s important that our arguments have weight, which is what the research contributes.”

*Susanne Helgeson*





# A Nordic graduate school for a stronger field of design

In order to reinforce and demarcate design research in the Nordic region, a shared graduate school that trains design researchers at the PhD level could be created to complement local and national programmes. Design Research Journal posed questions about this idea to some of the representatives who are participating in developing the concept, which was initiated by a network called Nordes – Nordic Design Research.



**Mikael Wiberg**  
Professor of Informatics,  
Umeå University

*Clarifying the concept of “design research” is not easy. Can a sharing of forces, such as in the form of a Nordic graduate school, improve the situation?*

“A Nordic graduate school would permit greater visibility and create a forum for discussing current design research. By meeting, presenting, and discussing various design research projects we jointly build up our field of research. A graduate school could be the platform for many such meetings and the discussions could give us new perspectives on what the concept of

‘design research’ might involve and encompass.”

*How would such a graduate school work – what would a possible setup/organisation look like?*

“There already exist a number of examples of functional national graduate schools in many fields. The field of design has a national graduate school in Sweden. In many ways I believe that a similar arrangement can be used to create a Nordic graduate school. I see great advantages with this, because we would create a forum for encounters between various fields of design research – such as industrial design, interaction design, human-machine interaction, and design-oriented research in informatics, to mention a few.”

*Are there any obstacles/disadvantages to a Nordic graduate school in design?*

“Of course there are always challenges involved in building up new activities. But I’m convinced that design research is now so widespread in the Nordic countries that we could quickly achieve critical mass in terms of activities and visibility. I am very positive towards the initiative and am convinced that it

will be an important resource for our doctoral students and be yet another way we can develop design research as a discipline.”

*Do you have any other ideas or advice about how to make design research better known among the general public?*

“Design is now a central feature of most aspects of our modern society. To a great extent, society is artificial, that is, created by us humans. With this creation as the starting point, there is every reason to further develop research into creative processes, that is, design. By providing examples of well-implemented design research we build confidence within society at large in the relevance of such research. Because design is central to the building of modern society, we have lots of time to construct design research in a systematic and stable way. This will benefit both society and design research itself. In doing this, it will be of central importance not only to present design as a product or method but also to show how design research builds knowledge about design. This knowledge has a wider audience of recipients in society as a whole.”



## Dagny Stuedahl

Department of Educational Research/InterMedia, Faculty of Educational Sciences, Oslo University

*Clarifying the concept of “design research” is not easy. Can a sharing of forces, such as in the form of a Nordic graduate school, improve the situation?*

“Such a school will make it possible to collectively ‘clean house’ a little within design research by placing various methodological and epistemological traditions in relation to one another. A Nordic graduate school in design will give the established researchers in the Nordic countries an opportunity to create a knowledge map of the design field – a mirror in which students in architecture, design, media and pedagogical research can reflect their own projects.

“In brief, shared forces benefit the design research field as a whole. Forces that in my eyes do not mean the same ones but rather a more comprehensive effort between differing perspectives.”

*How would such a graduate school work – what would a possible setup/organisation look like?*

“My background is in the humanities and I have a fundamental cultural edu-

cation in that field. I’ve spent a lot of time in learning to understand how the various design traditions have developed in relation to each other, the understanding of this knowledge and the choices of methods. As far as I know, there is no basic scientific book on design that describes the complexities and relationships in the design field in relation to the historical developments. A historical module as part of a Nordic training programme for researchers – one that surveys various Nordic design traditions, ideologies and methods – would in my view be an important way to give future design researchers an education in the design field. That is to say, a solid foundation for an understanding of the various design methods that are on offer today. A module that focuses on various design methods in relation to other research methods would also be important.”

*Are there any obstacles/disadvantages to a Nordic graduate school in design?*

“There are both advantages and disadvantages. Strangely enough, even though the Nordic countries live so close to each other and have so much history, language and culture in common, there are differences that we must emphasise. We both understand each other linguistically and culturally, and we don’t. Nordic design research is often formulated as a unit in which local differences are not articulated. This is both the biggest disadvantage and the biggest advantage – to work together to create a Nordic hub of researcher education in which different traditions and approaches are appreciated.”

*Do you have any other ideas or advice about how to make design research better known among the general public?*

“It has to be that design research, like all other research, more strongly

articulates its relationship to society’s challenges. This is done partly via discussions about sustainable design, and design related to climate changes and the health of the elderly. But how are the challenges within education and learning being met? I’m sure that both interaction and communication designers and architects could contribute basic methods for solving crises in the educational system and also broaden the concept of knowledge, which seems to be part of the problem in the sector.”



## Thomas Binder

Associate Professor, The School of Design, The Royal Danish Academy Of Fine Arts, Copenhagen

*Clarifying the concept of “design research” is not easy. Can a sharing of forces, such as in the form of a Nordic graduate school, improve the situation?*

“To me, a Nordic graduate school is a natural continuation of the good Nordic cooperation we’ve had for a number of years, for instance the Nordes conference. Design research is still a young research field and we must have contact with each other across both national borders and design traditions so that the field can continue to develop dynamically. Whilst large European countries often become ‘self-

sufficient' in design and design research, here in the Nordic region we have a natural incentive to cooperate across our differences. A graduate school that could offer more opportunities for researchers and research students can only help to increase our understanding of what design research is and can be, while at the same time we would be reinforcing the networks that are so critical to the research community."

*How would such a graduate school work – what would a possible setup/organisation look like?*

"Research and researchers are not always easy to steer. Research issues follow their own paths and researchers have never liked to be strictly controlled. This is very true in design research too. I therefore think it is important that we choose an organisation that is run via close dialogue with the affected research groups and has simple and transparent structures that provide environments which these groups cannot arrange for themselves."

*Are there any obstacles/disadvantages to a Nordic graduate school in design?*

"One concern with regard to both national and international initiatives that can be sparked among the research community is that the specific environment might be pressed to create a common form that does not facilitate what it is good at. It might be a particular problem in design research (which varies so much), to have the same journals, conferences and so on as those other research fields have. But I don't believe there is any reason for concern with regard to the Nordic graduate school, as we have already shown that we can cooperate at the Nordic level without wanting to force each other into different views of what constitutes design research."

*Do you have any other ideas or advice about how to make design research better known among the general public?*

"One of the things I look forward to is that over the coming year we will have so many people graduating with doctorates in design that they will create a new growth area both in our educational institutions and in the design profession. Design research has a lot to offer in terms of both innovations in design education and how design is practised within the industry. In that respect, closer Nordic cooperation will help create visibility."



**Lily Díaz**  
Professor, Media Lab,  
Aalto University, Helsinki

*Clarifying the concept of "design research" is not easy. Can a sharing of forces, such as in the form of a Nordic graduate school, improve the situation?*

"To clarify the concept, design research should focus on the dialogue between thinking and doing. One way to carry out this dialogue is to gather knowledge via scenarios within various disciplines and to find out the interest of various functions within society in the possible end result of design research. "In our intellectual landscape consisting of hyper- and multimedia, new,

personal and social media, design research is uniquely capable of relating to a constantly shifting horizon. Especially when one wants to develop innovations, design research is a dialectic process that moves between the domains of conceptual and practical knowledge. My interpretation of the concept of 'domain' underlines the practice-driven and down-to-earth orientation of the design field. Designers do not work in abstract environments but in everyday situations. That is why it's so important for design research to stick to user-focused methodology. It's also why we should strive to develop more humane ways to interview people. A Nordic graduate school could help speed all this up."

*How would such a graduate school work – what would a possible setup/organisation look like?*

"Cooperation between Nordic universities is very important; it's happening already and in my opinion can be expanded to benefit the region. The Nordic countries are already displaying clear signs of a shared identity, for instance how their societies regard social welfare. A Nordic graduate school in design could be a way to combine resources and strengthen both the educational and professional opportunities in the region."

*Are there any obstacles/disadvantages to a Nordic graduate school in design?*

"Everywhere today, young academics are facing an uncertain future in which they must often rely on themselves to build a career. It's very important to give young designers skills that enable them to 'invent' and market their own advancement within the profession. In the field of new media and IT-related design, the educational programme must develop in students the flexibility

and strength to continually pursue further training.”

*Do you have any other ideas or advice about how to make design research better known among the general public?*

“We should promote design both in cultural and intellectual contexts and in more popular ones. Just as children are encouraged to enter professions like physicians and researchers, we should develop good, positive images of the design field.”



**Pelle Ehn**

Professor, School of Arts and Communication (K3), Malmö University

*Clarifying the concept of “design research” is not easy. Can a sharing of forces, such as in the form of a Nordic graduate school, improve the situation?*

“Design research has two communication problems: ‘design’ and ‘research’. When modern design emerged it was in answer to the great social and political challenges of its age. More beautiful everyday wares for the masses was the answer of Nordic design, in the form of good-quality tables, chairs and other objects that were very fit for their purpose at reasonable prices. The intention was for good design to be accessible to

everyone and be part of society’s democratisation process. We can say that the same ideals hold true today but the big challenges are different and more complex.

“Now it’s about how we jointly create sustainable development – socially, environmentally, politically and economically. In this case, the design answers are less about having more ‘stuff’ and more about creating new possibilities for how we can live our lives together. These kinds of challenges and possibilities are the focus of design research today.

“Design research shares many of the features of design practice. That is its strength but also what makes it difficult to understand as research. It produces no absolute and indisputable truths; rather, it contributes to knowledge by collaboratively and concretely forming possible futures, which can often be both controversial and critical. Being able to contribute, in networks of doctoral students and more experienced researchers, to insights into this necessary change in the understanding of what Nordic design is and can be is an important aspect of a Nordic graduate school in design.”

*How would such a graduate school work – what would a possible setup/organisation look like?*

“The starting point must be that there already exist established design research and training programmes in the various countries, but that these can become better via Nordic cooperation. A graduate school in design would construct a strong network between these activities. This would occur in the form of an increased overall view and more accessibility of existing national course offerings, via annual joint Nordic ‘summer schools’/conferences and specific courses. The network would be for both

doctoral students and their supervisors, who also have a great need to compare experiences.”

*Are there any obstacles/disadvantages to a Nordic graduate school in design?*

“The risk of a Nordic graduate school in design lies in an excessively nostalgic retrospective view and a fetishising of Nordic design and designers from the last century. If we are to look back anyway, then a longer perspective can also be rewarding. The ancient Norse ‘thing’ – a parliament or assembly – is currently experiencing a renaissance in design. At these gathering places, controversial issues were handled jointly. The original etymological meaning of the concept indicates this social and political context, rather than today’s understanding of ‘things’ as the dead objects cherished by design. In this slightly longer perspective, design assemblies become forms of democratic creativity, and a model as good as any for future Nordic design. A Nordic graduate school in design could be regarded as being one of many design assemblies.”

*Do you have any other ideas or advice about how to make design research better known among the general public?*

“Marketing design research has no end in and of itself. But in order to be able to realise the asset that design research could potentially become in relation to the great challenges of our age, then we must make more people participants, not just designers and researchers. So the challenge for design research lies in making more people participants in controversial ‘assemblies’, not by marketing supposedly objective knowledge about new and old objects. A design assembly, not advertising campaigns, could be design research’s way to earn a place in the public sphere.”

*Interviewer: Susanne Helgeson*



# The first steps towards a strategic “design agenda”

Is it possible to demonstrate in an easily comprehensible way the innovation potential of the design field and how design research can help society develop for the better? One prerequisite is to increase cooperation between the various actors so as to increase its visibility. And then to jointly formulate a vision – a strategic research and innovation agenda. That is what the project called “Design for increased competitiveness” aims to do.

Design research and methodology are being carried out in many fields but not always with the visibility one might like. The research is funded in part by government initiatives that are seldom categorised as “design”.

Since the autumn of 2012 the project “Design for increased competitiveness” (within the framework of Vinnova’s programme “Strategic research and innovation agendas 2012”) has worked to produce a strategic research and innovation agenda in the field of design. So far

the result is a “design agenda” in A3 format.

## PROJECT EXTENSION

The project has just been extended until the autumn of 2013. In the next few months this design agenda will be the foundation for yet another step towards increasing the visibility of the design field’s innovation potential.

The aim of the strategic research and innovation agenda in the design field is to increase cooperation between various actors in the design field and to

create the conditions for many people to use design, understand it, or do research in the design field.

A number of actors were brought together last autumn to formulate a shared vision. The vision would in part include how design and design research can be made more visible, how design methodology can be used to develop new service functions, and how various actors might work together to realise these ideas.

## IMPORTANT POINTS FOR DISCUSSION

Workshops and discussion meetings focused on questions like: How can the existing resources and infrastructure for innovation ventures be used more effectively to produce more innovations in the service sector? How can design contribute to more such innovations? Why is Sweden good at design? The research situation both at universities and outside them was assessed. The idea was to produce a broad-based analysis that could withstand the passage of time and be supported by the participants, who came from a wide variety of backgrounds. There were design researchers, practising designers, private and public sector

## Design for increased competitiveness

In 2012 and 2013 SVID together with a variety of stakeholders in the design field formulated a national agenda for developing the design field in Sweden. Performed under Vinnova’s Strategic Research and Innovation Agendas call for proposals, the agenda is an open process in which the number of individuals and organisations involved expands during the work. One purpose of the agenda process is to formulate a joint vision for the future: “Sweden, as a nation, takes design seriously and acts accordingly. Swedish competitiveness is strengthened through increased awareness of the potential of design within the private and public sectors. We have a strong user focus in the development of public and private products and services. We have a high awareness of what design is. Sweden has strong and internationally competitive design schools and is well known for its design research.”

The Design Agenda can be downloaded from [www.designagenda.ning.com](http://www.designagenda.ning.com).



PHOTO: TOBIAS WAHLQVIST

Concentrated agenda work, sometimes in relaxed circumstances.

educational coordinators and representatives of funding bodies, as well as people from SVID, which organised the gatherings. Gradually it was possible to agree on nine different needs that must be met in order for society to be able to benefit from the design knowledge and research that already exist, and to develop it. These needs were grouped under three key words: knowledge, leadership and awareness.

Within the theme of knowledge, it is necessary to “use and find already existing and published design research and design-relevant research”, to have interdisciplinary expertise and to be able to “explore future possibilities”.

Within the theme of leadership, the aim is to promote the existence of private and public sector decision makers who have an awareness of design, to find “structures for design as a process for innovation and development” and to develop knowledge exchange in the design field.

Within the third theme, awareness, the needs involve “initiating a debate to develop and broaden the concept of design and increase awareness about design”, to “be able to describe the value of design” and to present “design as an alternative prototype-driven working method that proposes relevant totalities.”

#### MEASURES AND ACTORS

Suggestions for measures were developed for all these areas of need and suggestions concerning possible actors were listed. This information can now be found on the design agenda’s A3 sheet, together with the jointly formulated five-point vision for the future. This is what a desired future in the year 2020 looks like:

- Sweden is a nation that takes design seriously and acts accordingly.

We achieve stronger Swedish competitiveness via increased insight into the potential of design in the private and public sectors.

- A strong user focus in the development of public and private products and services.
- Awareness that design is a user-centred development process in which exploratory prototype work produces suggestions for relevant totalities.
- Strong and internationally competitive design education programmes.
- Well-known design research that is used.

#### MORE ACTORS

During the work with the agenda it emerged that there are even more actors who it should be possible to involve in future work, and that it is important to have an open process. Everyone must feel involved; the design agenda is not owned by anyone but by all of the stakeholders involved.

*Bo Westerlund, Sten Ekman and Anna Romboli* were some of the participants. What did they think of the working method and end result?

“I feel that the agenda document is a reasonable presentation in this limited format and I felt that I could contribute based on both my experiences of design research and the teaching I do of doctoral students in design. Continued work on the agenda must be shared, cohesive and inclusive,” comments Bo Westerlund, professor of industrial design and currently head of the Design Faculty.

He took part in a number of email discussions, a workshop on design research and a working meeting on design research and cooperation – a total of two days.

Sten Ekman, who has a doctorate

of innovation technology from the School Of Innovation, Design And Engineering at Mälardalen University, took part in the workshops on developing ideas.

“The design agenda in an A3 format functions well and is clear. My perspective and research field is innovation, unlike the others in my group. I could probably expand the perspective to also include innovation and design.

“A more detailed application to Vinnova this autumn would be a good idea in order to get resources for a larger project based on the design agenda. Design and innovation are being integrated more and more nowadays but I believe that SVID is the organisation in Sweden that can best get this to work as a larger project thanks to its extensive network. Most of the others who will be applying for funding will probably do it only from the ‘innovation perspective’. We must give design a higher profile within innovation processes. The application process should involve both design expertise and innovation expertise from both academia and industry.”

#### THE A3 SHEET

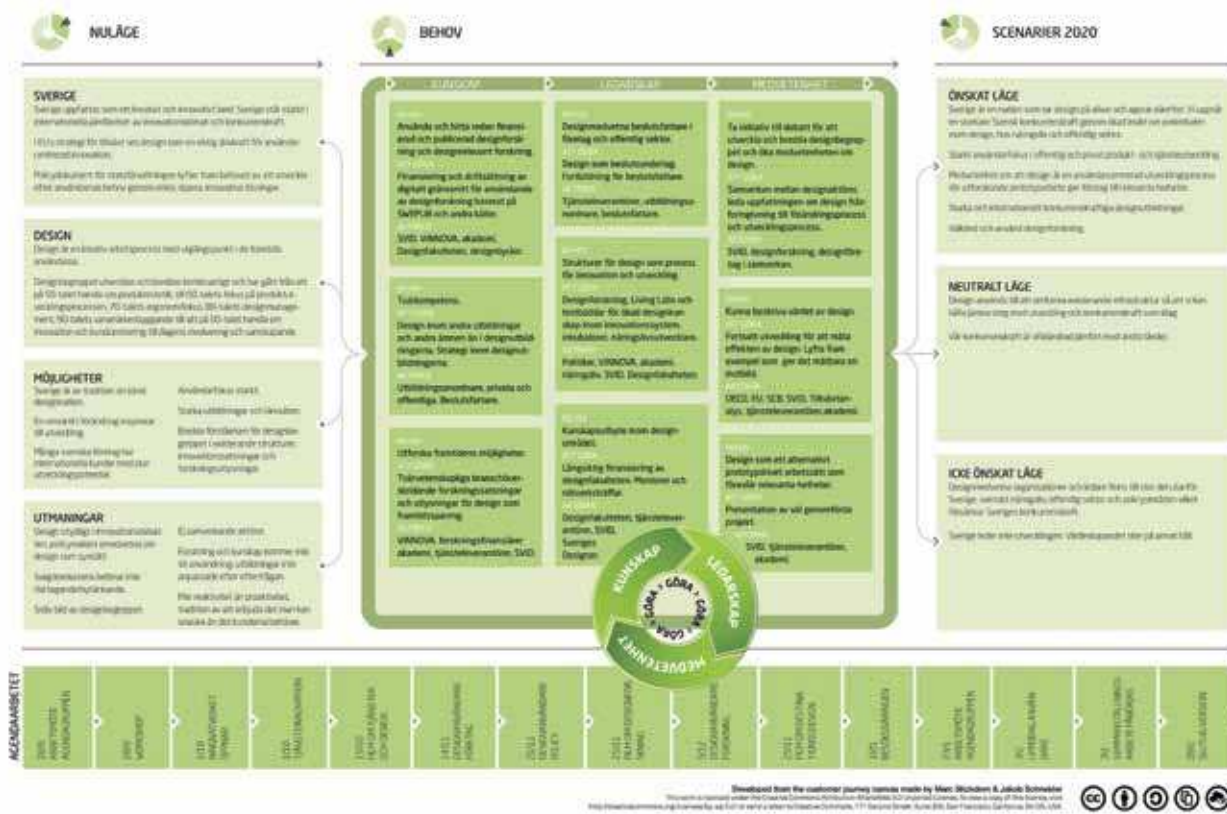
##### CLARIFIES THE SITUATION

The final participant interviewed, Anna Romboli, works at Veryday, a design and innovation consultancy, and has contacts within both Swedish and international companies and organisations that are working strategically with design. She was involved in the think tank that functioned as a sounding board and presented knowledge about and various ways to approach how design contributes to the force for innovation and development in Sweden.

“The initial aim of the agenda work was to formulate ‘why design is



# Design skapar konkurrenskraft och innovation utifrån användaren



The design agenda includes information about the current situation, needs and future scenarios. A number of practical questions are included as a starting point for future work. At the bottom an overview of the meetings, workshops etc. that led to the end result.

important to Swedish competitiveness'. In order to involve the key actors who are needed to drive the issue further, the private sector's knowledge and interest are crucial. That was why it was a very important angle for me in the work. In terms of design research, our company is both a party that produces and contributes to research whilst also being a recipient of the design research being done. In this way I have been able to have differing perspectives on research issues."

With regard to the end result, she says:

"I believe the A3 'map' simplifies and clarifies the situation. There is

a lot to be included and it is a real challenge to fit in everything in a way that can be grasped. I feel that the 'agenda' is sufficiently concrete without being too detailed. I hope it will serve as a good foundation that can be used to further this work."

"The work on the agenda has been a good initiative and can hopefully be regarded as the start of something that we lack in Sweden today. I hope that the work will continue so that we can also see results in the future. Some ideas about how to continue the work already exist and I believe one of the big challenges is to set up a shared and unifying force that will drive this and

prioritise so that the work doesn't stop. Many of the required measures are not the type that can be implemented overnight – long-term commitment is necessary."

## THE WORK CONTINUES

Of course that is the case. Making the innovation potential of the design field and design research generally recognised needs more than a vision written on one sheet of paper. But the groundwork has been laid.

*Lotta Jonson*

# In and for the public sphere



**KATARINA WETTER  
EDMAN**

Business & Design Lab, HDK –  
School of Design and Crafts,  
University of Gothenburg



**STEFAN HOLMLID**

Human-Centered Systems  
(HCS), Department of  
Computer and Information  
Science, IDA,  
Linköping University

This special issue of *Design Research Journal* is focused on *design in and for the public sector and public spaces*. Previous issues have discussed public design (2012:1), designing with the user (2012:2) and service design (2010:1) so what could possibly motivate yet another issue on this topic?

For some years increasing attention has been directed towards the potential of design in these sectors (Parker & Heapy, 2006; European Commission, 2012). This interest has focused on design's potential for innovative, human-centred and participatory approaches by which design brings an outside-in perspective to the development of these organisations. The reshaping of how situations are experienced and the reframing of perceived problems have been especially highlighted (Blyth & Kimbell, 2011). However, there are still calls for understanding, from both designers and actors within the public sector, as to what design actually achieves and how to understand the contribution of design practice in these settings.

This was evidenced by the interest in the track The craft of design in design of service at the 10th European Academy of Design Conference, April 17–19 in Gothenburg<sup>1</sup>. The track attracted 22 papers, of which 11 were selected for presentation. One session was dedicated explicitly to papers related to the public sphere. This theme was also present in several other tracks during the conference.

The call for papers preceding this issue of *Design Research Journal* attracted 14 submissions. Following the review process, two papers were selected as representative of how the field is structured today with regard to research interests and focus. In the first article, *Embodying, enacting and entangling design: a phenomenological view to co-designing services*, developed from a paper presented at the EAD conference, Yoko Akama and Alison Prendiville draw on anthropological theories to counter some of the limits of service design and move beyond the focus on methods. They propose co-designing in the senses of *being* and *becoming* as one approach to catalysing the transformative service design processes. In the paper by Stefano Maffei, Beatrice Villari and Francesca Foglieni the central question of assessing design in the public sector is addressed. The authors explore existing methods for evaluating design in the public sector and propose an evaluation framework across strategic, development and executive levels.

*Stefan Holmlid, Katarina Wetter Edman*

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1. The papers from the conference can be found here: <http://t.co/Gdpek2hhj9>.



**ALISON PRENDIVILLE**

LCC, University of the Arts,  
London, UK

**YOKO AKAMA**

School of Media and  
Communication, RMIT  
University, Melbourne,  
Australia

Embodying, enacting and entangling design:

# A PHENOMENOLOGICAL VIEW TO CO-DESIGNING SERVICES

BY YOKO AKAMA & ALISON PRENDIVILLE

**KEYWORDS:**

Phenomenology, co-designing, service design,  
methods.



## ABSTRACT

What is holding back service design from making a distinct departure from a product-centred to a socio-material human-centred framework? We have a concern for co-designing that is often discussed as a generic method to develop empathetic connections and understandings of people and their contexts. In this use, mastering the craft of co-designing had inadvertently isolated the method from the practitioner, fragmenting its process as a series of static events or a tool for deployment in staged workshops. Contributing to current debates on co-designing and design anthropology, our paper seeks to re-entangle co-designing back into its lived and enacted contexts. We see co-designing as a reflexive, embodied process of discovery and actualisation, and it is an integral, on-going activity of designing services. Co-designing can catalyse a transformative process in revealing and unlocking tacit knowledge, moving people along on a journey to 'make real' what proposed services might be like in the future. Co-designing plays a critical role especially when it involves the very people who are enmeshed in the realisation of the proposed services itself. As such, our case study of a weekend Ordnance Survey *Geovation* camp pays closer attention to how this took place and discusses the transformative process that was central to it. By taking a phenomenological perspective and building on a seminal anthropologists' work, Tim Ingold, our paper counters the limitations in service design that tends to see its process as a contained series of fixed interactions or systemized process of methods. Through Ingold, we see 'the social world as a tangle of threads or life-paths, ever ravelling here and unravelling there, within which the task for any being is to improvise a way through, and to keep on-going. Lives are bound up in the tangle.' Similarly, we view co-designing as *being* and *becoming*, that is constantly transforming and connecting multiple entanglements.

## INTRODUCTION

Public services in Western economies are being fundamentally re-shaped and re-formed by acknowledging that people who use such services have hidden, latent resources. Government-driven, one-size-fits-all approaches to service delivery to fix social 'wicked problems' are inadequate due to the diverse character and needs of communities. It is increasingly recognised that various stakeholders need to collectively draw on their local, situated knowledge (Parker & Parker 2007). The open source paradigm uses distributed network and collaborative modes of delivery through participation to devise effective solutions

(Sangiorgi 2011). Going well beyond the idea of 'citizen engagement' or 'service user involvement', service providers are pooling the capacities and knowledge of service users and the wider community in order to provide a mutually supportive network of people around the service (Boyle & Harris 2009). In this dynamic relationship, service provision becomes an on-going combination of resources through its integration and application where people become an active participant of the value creation process (Wieland et al 2012).

In this context, co-designing is commonly seen as an effective method for engaging people in a collaborative process. Examining co-designing in design discourse revealed several key definitions. According to Mattlemäki & Visser's (2011) extensive literature review that compared how co-design and co-creation are used, their findings suggests that both terms are often used interchangeably, describing a range of creative methods to involve various stakeholders' input. They summarise four findings of co-design:

- it describes general involvement of designers and users when exploring, envisioning and developing solutions
- it brings a political and power-dimensional aspect of empowerment, giving voice and tools to those who are not usually involved in a design process (e.g. participatory design)
- it describes engagement of potential users and stakeholder collaboration
- it is a general process or tool for collaborative engagement

Seminal contribution by Liz Sanders emphasised harnessing people's creativity, broadening the focus from just 'users' alone and the functionality it implies with the term 'use', towards seeing *both users and designers* as 'everyday people', bringing an empathetic orientation to respect peoples ideas, desires and dreams (Sanders 2000, 2002; Sanders & Stappers 2008). Others have acknowledged that co-designing is a complex staged series of events and performances enacted both by people and materials, networked in a Latourian sense (Eriksen 2012; Vaajakallio 2012), catalysed by the shifts from *designing* for to *co-designing with* people.

When co-designing enters service design, it magnifies unique features such as intangibility, experience, temporality and more commonly, co-production. Yet the discourse in service design is still dominated by an object-oriented thinking, reflected in how methods and services are

conceived. This is not surprising, given the legacy of ‘goods-dominant logic’ in services that emphasises goods (objects) as central to the production and distribution of value. Wieland and colleagues (2012) argue that this prevalent paradigm for services embeds value during the production process. The ‘customer’ is seen as a ‘consumer’ of such value, and services are viewed as add-ons to goods or special types of treatment, but seen as inferior to goods. Designers that traditionally made ‘things’ might also view services in a ‘goods-dominant logic’. Buchanan’s (1998) four orders of design describes its historical transition from designing physical objects in the second order to designing systems and environments in the fourth order. Progression of those trained in the first (graphic) and second order (product) of design has initially contributed to the field of service design. The consequence is such that the object-centred legacy still holds firm, and with it, its tools and offerings – touch-points, digital artefacts, blueprint, service concept map – rather than the active power of the process of co-designing.

Reflecting on these various discourses and evolution of co-designing we pursue a phenomenological approach to further nuance it as a continuous growth, movement and transformation of people, relationships and understandings. Phenomenologists’ see knowledge as active, created in the ‘living’ moment and affective, bodily encounters in our world. Through this lens, the paper draws centrally from the work of the anthropologist, Tim Ingold, to inject his concepts into the service design discourse to lift us, literally and metaphorically, into a richer mode of perceiving. Ingold is a seminal scholar who seeks a critical yet generous understanding of human beings and knowing in the world as continuous phenomena, rather than perceiving them as disconnected particulars that have to be joined up to be rendered coherent (2007). Metaphors such as ‘lines’ and ‘walking’ thus feature strongly through Ingold’s writing to describe continuum, movement, trajectory and most importantly, embodiment, to entangle histories and relations to place and people. In building on his work, it can help us re-situate services as an organic, co-created process and see co-designing as a journey and process of transformation in how we design our world, and ourselves, with others.

In order to ‘bring to life’ how co-designing a service manifested we share vignettes of a case study drawn from workshops that involved postgraduate service design students and team members undertaking the *Geovation Challenge* as part of the Ordnance Survey (OS) open innovation strategy. This initiative generated various Geomedia services for potential social, environmental and

economic benefits. Through observation and reflection on the workshops, we discuss three movements of co-designing to situate it within a phenomenological framework, as opposed to a series of methodological steps. First, we see the process of co-designing as a way that reveals tacit knowledge, experienced and ingrained in the everyday of the Geovation team members. Ingold’s view is central to our discussion, that the ways of knowing come from inhabiting the world; ‘knowing is itself a path of movement through the world ... along a line of travel’ (2007, p. 89). The co-designing process can unlock tacit knowing that is embedded in our lived experiences. Secondly, we look at co-designing through sketching and drawing, giving shape and rhythm to the flows that moves the process along. Each progressive sketch – capturing, synthesising, distilling, combining, imagining, revealing – is a movement that loops past and current understandings, and propels us forward to somewhere further we could go. The engagement through drawing and making, acts not only as ‘mnemonic devices but also as materials that are making social relations possible’ (Nafus and Anderson 2010, p.202). And lastly, we discuss how co-designing ‘brings to life’ the prototyped services, which can only come to being through flows and movement of other things and people. Yet, it is not just the services that are undergoing transformation - it is also continually occurring to those who are part of its very process. ‘The inhabitant is rather one who participates from within the very process of the world’s continual coming into being and who, in laying a trail of life, contributes to its weave and texture’ (Ingold 2007, p. 81).

We firmly situate design as a continuous process and activity, and so in this paper, we use the term *designing* as a verb (hence, *co-designing*). To say we engage *in design* (a noun) loses such distinction between process and outcome, and likewise, we apply this same logic to using *designing services* and use *service design* to denote the name of the field. This helps us reinforce the notion that services are not an end outcome or a resultant of a series of fixed interactions. Instead, it is an on-going process of transformation, which grows and evolves, very much like a living organism. Aside this fundamental point masked as a grammatical note, we have noticed other forces at work that attempts to formalise and systematise the process of designing. The next section examines this more closely.

#### THE PROBLEM WITH METHODS IN SERVICE DESIGN

We have observed a persistent trend in service design where methods alone have become king, as a way to legitimise the

field and a practical way to 'be a service designer'. Attempts to clarify, structure and advocate the benefit of service design has led to a sweeping phenomenon of 'glossing over' the contextual knowledge grounded in action and the messy realities of practice (Akama 2009). Service design suffers from the same issue beset to most description of design methods as something that can be separated from the practicing designer, exported and become 'commodified' for repeatability (see Akama & Light's 2012 provocation at *AltCHI* conference).

However, we put this critique carefully so as not to throw the baby out with the bathwater. As a young, nascent field, service design needed a step-by-step, 'how to' guide. Such introductory experiences through service design *Jams* or downloadable toolkits play a vital role for those who are entering this field. We, as educators in service design, have immensely benefited from artefacts like IDEO cards and Stickdorn and Schneider's (2010) book on service design in teaching students the basics ropes. Such products' accessibility has great value on many levels, including its seductive materiality (as objects) and simplicity in instruction. Other books are highly effective as training manuals that come with a promise of mastery in methods. Though, our concern is that mastery in methods does not necessarily equate to proficiency in designing services, or indeed, practicing as a human-centred designer. We need to revisit the emphasis that promotes methods as if it can be as easily replicable and readily portable into any manner of contexts. Methods and techniques cannot be reduced down to a formula. Skilled practice 'is not just the application of mechanical force to the exterior of objects, but entails qualities of care, judgment, dexterity ... whatever practitioners do to things is grounded in an attentive, perceptual involvement with them ... they watch and feel as they work' (Ingold, 2000, p. 353). Similarly, we argue that designers progress from a novice to an expert through their embeddedness in the context and their fusion with their enacted tools or methods.

When co-designing is framed as a generic methodological umbrella for involving others in designing services, it can carry with it the same emphasis of detachment and replicability. We argue that the *craft of designing services* isn't about better mastery of methods or use of 'tools', but brought by a gradual attunement of action and perception through an 'active engagement with the constituents of his or her surroundings' (Ingold 2000, p. 5). In describing attunement, Light and Akama's (2012) paper traced the growth of empathy and understanding through personal

encounters they had with a community at risk from natural disasters. 'Attuning ... cemented more nebulous understandings of people and how to approach them ... Saturation in the issues helped the designers feel their way and focus, and thus to become an embodied conduit to share their learning' (p 66).

Co-designing makes a different organisational and socio-material practice (Eriksen 2012, p. 24), shifting away from the focus on methods and pre-designed proposals to an awareness of 'participating materials and formatting co-designing in the situation and network where people and materials meet, align and make each other act'. The addition of those two little letters 'co' in co-designing (ibid) is a philosophical and epistemological shift, signalling an openness to embrace the influence, interventions, disruptions, tensions and uncertainties brought to bear by other things and people. It requires the designer to step into the 'in-between' space that is dynamic, emergent and relational. It necessitates the designer to entangle itself into this space whilst being 'crafted' by it, as well as 'crafting' it.

Service design has reached a watershed that requires its seasoned designers to mature the depth and quality of this field. Contrary to common belief that a maturity of the field is in having a 'systematised' repertoire of distinctive methods, we argue that the sign of proficiency is to grapple with the complexity and messiness in projects, and avoid sanitising it to 'fit' method-centric accounts. The challenge and responsibility for design researchers must surely be to go down the harder road and to tell the 'swampy' (Schön 1983) stories of what is really involved when designing services. And this story includes the improvisations that are necessary to 'fit' encountered situations (Williams & Irani 2010) and the embodied experience of the practicing designer that determines the actions that are taken in situ (Goodman et al 2010). An appropriate object of analysis for design research is the designer *using the method* (Light 2010) –methods and techniques require embodiment. There is no method until it is invoked. The designer's knowledge changes, and so the subsequent method they perform and enact, as they engage, observe and 'make' things with others (Light & Akama 2012). If designing is a process of transforming materials or generating a new value-creation process (Vargo and Lusch 2008), we must also remember that such transformation firstly occurs within ourselves. The practitioner must never 'scrub' themselves out from these accounts.

## BACKGROUND TO THE CASE STUDY

The following section gives the general outline of the



Ordnance Survey's<sup>1</sup> (OS) *Geovation Challenge*. This is a learning context for the students in the Master of Design in Service Design Innovation, London College of Communication, University of the Arts London. Launched in 2009 as part of OS's open innovation strategy, the *Geovation Challenge* is a crowd sourced innovation initiative that aims to support entrepreneurs and developers realise their cartographic and geographic data ideas through running themed challenges. In the past, topics such as '*How Can we Improve Britain's Transport*' 2011 and '*How Can we Transform Britain's Neighbourhoods Together*' 2012 had taken place. The challenge encourages the application of geomedia to deliver social, environmental and economic benefits. The submitted entries are shortlisted with the best ideas receiving seed funding to develop them further. The paper has woven specific vignettes from this initiative to illuminate the 'micro-moments of interaction' (Light 2010) that took place during the co-designing engagements. As such, the case study may seem small and short, but they are in fact a part of a longer, on-going process.

For the past three years, a group of ten students have been invited to take part in a weekend-long innovation camp. Several years of groundwork preparation by the staff responsible ensures that there is mutual focus and direction on social innovation. The synergies between *Geovation Challenge* and the MDes programme has been established through on-going dialogues and professional relationships between the stakeholders to create a shared set of human-centred values that sees the potential of service design and geomedia<sup>2</sup> as a driver of change. Both *Geovation* and the MDes course in service design is about lived experiences – food, waste, health, transportation, aging and the contradictions that arise through the need for a growing economy, sustainability and quality of life. These are topics that are integral to the MDes programme and it attracts students who resonate strongly with these issues. The pedagogic role of taking part in the innovation camp is an accelerated form of practicing their ethnographic skills and learning-through-experiencing the rich and dynamic

complexity of co-designing with others.

Students are encouraged to explore and support the realisation of the shortlisted ideas through co-designing in teams. Usually, there are 17–20 teams consisting of local government, non-profit organisations and IT companies, who are competing against each other to win the seed fund. Before participating in the innovation camp, students review the shortlisted ideas in class. First impressions in terms of their service strengths and weaknesses are discussed. At this stage, it is difficult to determine the service offer and the potential of the proposed solution without more information. Upon arriving at the OS Head Office, ice-breaking activities are undertaken where all the *Geovation* team members and students take part. It is an informal gathering though the mood in the room has the tension of a competition as the teams mingle, some being more open and approachable than others. The story continues in the next section.

#### CO-DESIGNING TO UNLOCK TACIT KNOWLEDGE

*Each room, white and plain, is occupied by a couple of teams who are seated around tables talking amongst themselves; the atmosphere is focused and intense. The ten students divide and join the various groups to observe and absorb the discussions. The first introductions are most intimidating. The teams are incurious to the role and support the students are offering. For many of the teams this is the first time they have encountered designers and are unsure of what their purposes are in this phase. The existing groups reluctantly break-off their discussions to provide a brief description of the problem they have identified and their solution. These descriptions frequently lack clarity and it is difficult to determine how the proposed geomedia service will be taken-up and sustained. Initially, the *Geovation* teams take notes and make lists with each other but there is no shared social experience. Students ask questions on the origin of the idea, the catalyst and the scale of the problem. Slowly, the team share their stories on how they came up with their concept through their daily lives and experiences; for example, a person tells the story of suffering verbal abuse as a result of her disability. Some of these stories are deeply personal. As these experiences are being shared, students listen and start sketching, visualising these experiences and the narrative. These open up further conversation on how their solution has the potential to transform a neighbourhood or a community. With each sketch the story moves forward. By the afternoon the previously clean and blank rooms are transformed into spaces full of*

1. Ordnance Survey is a Government owned mapping agency in the UK. Its origins were in the 18th Century to comprehensively map the South Coast of England as part of the Government's defence strategy to hold off an invasion. Famed for its paper-based maps throughout the 20th Century, its contemporary form is digital mapping data that accounts for around 90% of its business. It provides both the public and private sector with reliable geographic data to support decision making and assist in the delivery of effective services such as transport logistics, the police and insurance companies. <http://www.ordnance-survey.co.uk/oswebsite/>

2. Geomedia refers to location specific software, databases whose essential purpose is to index information on a particular location.

*working sketches, maps and prototypes, interweaving and embellishing the stories...*

We see here that co-designing is already taking place among the *Geovation* team members, prior to the students taking part. This co-designing corresponds to the description by Mattlemäki & Visser (2011, p. 2) that is aimed at ‘searching new potential directions and producing design ideas and solutions’, to make sense of the topic at the early phases of exploring. The teams have come to the camp with their proposed idea, and they are engrossed in discussion to work on it further without knowing what the students’ contribution will be. However, through the students’ active engagement, dialogue, listening and sketching, another dimension of co-designing becomes more apparent. The combination of these activities connected the students and the team, enabling a flow of stories that became richer, bridging the experiences between them. For the team members, communication that was lost in rapid dialogue had transformed when the students began drawing. Mapping was useful in taking rudimentary, disconnected ideas to reveal the interplay of locally situated practices and the complexity of place (Fig. 1). One team member expressed how the visualisations were more than a representation of the team’s proposed service, and its true power lay in the fact that visual skills ignited dialogues that were not in place before (Albagli 2012). One student commented how ‘it elucidates and tests mental models in ways [that is] outside the competency of words, changing our way of imagining’ (ibid, p. 35). Engaging in such activities dissipated uncertainties of ‘how they would collaborate to evolve their ideas’ and whether they would be ‘willing to embrace the risks of dismantling and re-arranging their original thoughts or maybe redefining them from scratch’ (ibid, p. 31).

Co-designing here can be seen as a process of drawing people together and making connections in-between. Social relations are being created ‘...in the process of people moving between text, visual, material and orality’ (Nafus and Anderson 2010, p. 202). In the space of this in-betweenness, co-designing is neither the ownership of one person’s nor another’s. Visualisation joins ownerships of ideas amongst the different team members thus strengthening the collaborative workings.

Putting a line down on a piece of paper is a co-created act that breaks down barriers and opens up an engagement in a shared space with others. At its most essential, drawing describes ‘a line alert to the changes of the rhythm and feelings of surfaces, spaces and people’ (Goldsworthy 1994,

p. 82). The act of drawing is an alchemical process where lines and surfaces join people together in imagination and communication. This process is not only to cement what is collectively known, but also to generate understanding that is tacitly felt or articulated about a certain thing or experience.

In describing tacit knowledge, Polanyi explains, ‘owing to the ultimately tacit character of all our knowledge, we remain ever unable to say all that we know, so also, in view of the tacit character of meaning, we can never quite know what is implied in what we say’ (1962, p. 95). It is as intuitive as guesses, hunches and imaginings of a pre-logical phase of knowing, where the meaning might not become clear until it is born into the world. Conversations, as seen between the team members and students here, are in-between spaces where meanings and understandings can be generated together on the particular Geomedia services that are being imagined.

Catalysed by the students’ sketches, co-designing emphasises people’s sensory and perceptual consciousness and is based on taking-in and working with what is, rather than manipulating an environment or situation to some predetermined outcome. Co-designing can be described as a mode of awareness that is receptive and open to events as they happen, apprehending an engagement directly. It unlocks tacit knowledge that can be holistic, non-verbal, non-linear and intuitive. Co-designing is an interconnected process, moving freely among person to person, deepening each person’s awareness and understanding as it unfolds.



Fig. 1 Images from Geovation Challenge (Albagli 2012)

#### CO-DESIGNING A JOURNEY – CARRYING PEOPLE FROM PAST, CURRENT TO FUTURE

*The students are encouraged to listen, to observe and to draw. Through drawing, they interpret and translate the conversation, and by showing this to the Geovation team, a mutual understanding emerges and the students begin to understand the potential service narrative. With each sketch the story moves forward. The visualisation of the story changes the dynamic of the teams. Problems that were previously unseen are recognised, discussions ensue, stories are revisited and slowly the services unfold. Solutions that were originally seen simplistically as a technological offering grow to show their complexity of humanness. In parallel, the teams' per-*

*ception of the students also shifts from initially being viewed as an interloper, someone to use at the end of the weekend to make the final presentations attractive, to a critical contributor to moving the project forward, giving form and making the ideas and solutions real.*

The team members bring embodied, tacit knowledge and immersive experiences gained through their daily jobs, for example, as volunteers, public sector employees and campaigners in non-profit organisations. Some of these stories and experiences are deeply personal, emotional and confronting. Despite not having first-hand experiences of such contexts, the mature-age students also bring their past and current life experiences, through family ties and

relationships, previous working environments and the rapid developments occurring within their home countries. They bring their motivation for societal challenges and the environment, and the potential of designing services to act as a driver of change. All of this knowledge, memories and encounters are brought to bear, and crucially, it retains that connection to the past.

Ingold's (2007) poetic metaphor of 'line-making' is useful here, where he encompasses many human activities, such as walking, observing, storytelling, drawing and writing. All these have commonalities of threads, traces, temporality and trajectories – a process of generating tacit understandings of our surroundings 'forged in the very course of our moving through them' (p. 88). This also usefully describes the process of drawing, as seen in the exchanges between the students and team members. These sketches enable a confirmation of the unfolding, unvoiced knowing or other

tangential understandings to develop. This is not a linear process but one that grows from each action and encounter. Together, they knit the entanglements of lines from their collective experiences to something that is becoming – manifesting – in front of them.

Ingold's work on mapping is apposite to the co-designing of geomeia services, where the 'everyday knowing' and opening-up of stories so locally bound, is critical to designing services. Ingold explains the importance of knowing one's whereabouts, not by comprehending an independent system of co-ordinates, but by knowing its place through its history. 'Places exist not in space but as nodes in a matrix of movement' (2011, p. 219). Knowledge of a place is thus embedded in locally situated practices. In contrast, lines that are made up of dots have no movement (see Fig. 2). The danger of viewing co-designing as an assemblage of stages is to break up the fluid movement into disparate



Figure 2: A scatter of dots joined up – drawn by Tim Ingold (2007, p. 74).



fixed points. These dots are reduced representations of time, places and people. Criticism for designers who ‘parachute’ into projects suffer the same disadvantages here, like the dots that are ‘broken off from those preceding and following ... they do not grow or develop’ (Ingold 2010, p. 74), disabling them from establishing an integrated knowing and relationship with the project context. Similarly, co-designing needs to be firmly rooted in its location, time and people and ‘grows out’ organically from rich engagements and deep interactions over time.

Here, the generated service prototypes in the *Geovation* camp, based on imagined scenarios, assists the movement from the now to the future. Prototypes are central to practices of participatory design (Sundström et al 2011), prompting engagement with users and imagining possible future use (Brandt and Grunnet 2000). Its central purpose is creating an imagined future outcome of a design process (Gunn & Donovan 2012). Through co-designing and unfolding of the service, proposed solutions shift from being seen as an isolated technological touch-point to something that can be enmeshed in the flows of everyday lives. Co-designing moves people along on a journey of discovery and actualisation. Even though their reality is rooted in the here and now, it asks people to play with the edges of this reality to imagine what it could or should be.

#### CO-DESIGNING TO ‘BRING TO LIFE’

*The room falls silent when prototyping takes place. It's another level of activity that absorbs everyone in concentration. They are all engrossed in cutting, sticking and making things such as large mobile phone mock-ups and stop-frame animations for the proposal by members of the Probationary service – ‘Community Payback Visibility’. These act as stage props in bringing the imagined services to life. This service is based on using the mobile phone to photo any graffiti and fly-tipping on the street. A map is created to report the clean-up by offenders to the public. People act out sequences of what could happen, using the props, leading them to role-play different scenarios. Different perspectives unfold through the scenarios – from the victims of crime, local neighbourhoods, probationary services and supporting sectors. Potential controversies and reactions by the local and national media also thread into the discussions. They imagine how the clean-up effort by the offenders ties in with the service. There is pleasure and surprise expressed at the realisation that these ideas have a life, a potential for change.*

The culmination of drawing and sketching combines multiple threads, carving a shared path that leads to

another form of co-designing that of prototyping services. Prototypes, scenarios and touch-points grow out from such stories and drawings. Though the prototypes are crudely shaped from pieces of paper, cardboard and sticky-tape (see Fig. 1), it transforms and materialises the idea, making the invisible visible, turning the fiction into something tangible. They invite people to make it genuine. According to Erksen (2012, p.234) there is a ‘special kind of collaborative materializing’ taking place when co-designing in groups ‘where the dialogue with the material is often intense and can be surprising’. This materialisation is giving ‘form to ideas, details, proposals, issues and questions’ (ibid). Materialisation and making of the material is ‘talking back’ (Schön 1986) to the team and the situation.

Eriksen’s observations resonate with what we are seeing in the *Geovation* workshop. Through role-play, imagined scenarios of acceptance, rejection, bewilderment and entanglement with broader political, social and technological debates are enacted and experienced by the students and team members. Improvisation is a way of dealing with life as it unfolds and our paths blend with it (Ingold 2010). In the act of improvising a service using prototypes, it uses our own experiences to inform our enactment of it. It is impossible to disconnect our lived paths. It echoes our personal experiences, the impromptu moments that can make services so unpredictable and uncontained. These co-designing moments bring the future service ‘to life’ and, at the same time, connect it back to our own lived realities. They could be conceived of as ‘knots’ – convoluted lines that link other lines – bringing together different strands of experiences and perspective, together weaving a meshwork of lines (Fig. 3). These knots are ‘formed of the very lines along which life is lived ... they trail beyond it’ (Ingold 2007, p. 100). In this way, services are woven into the meshwork – the web of life and living.

However, it is not just the services that are ‘brought to life’ through co-designing – transformation is also continually occurring to those who are part its very process. ‘The inhabitant is ... one who participates from within the very process of the world’s continual coming into being and who, in laying a trail of life, contributes to its weave and texture’ (Ingold 2007, p. 81). Team members and students are enriched through co-designing, having absorbed like osmosis, each other’s knowledge and lived experiences. It is a human-centred connection and a shared experience of co-creation. Co-designing have materialised various number of tangible, on-going connections. For the *Geovation* team members, what was previously a dry, technological solution

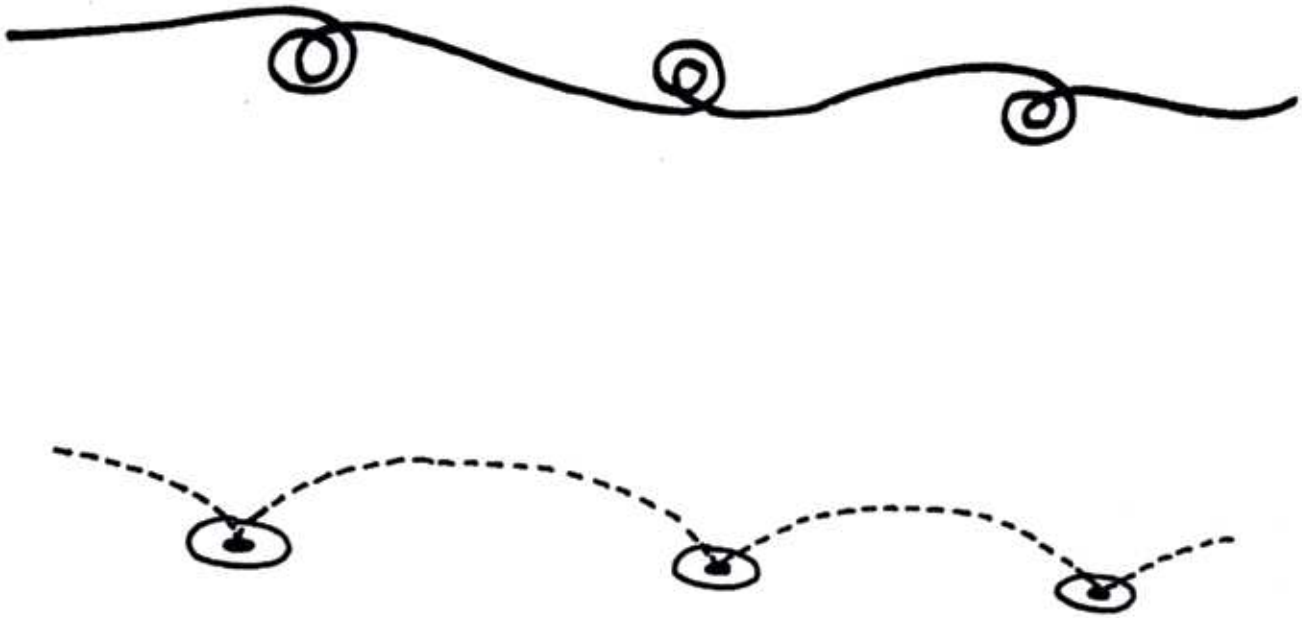


Figure 3: The knot, drawn below, is in contrast to the dot that 'hops' from one to the next. Drawn by Tim Ingold (2007, p. 101)

had transformed into something real with meaning and connection to their lives. By the final presentations the team members often become emotionally heightened with a sense of collective gratitude to the students' efforts of bringing their service ideas to life. Relationships that are initiated between the team members and students have often continued. Students have been given internships opportunities or invited to provide design support for the next round of the Geovation service development.

Participating in what Ingold says as the 'continual coming into being' and 'contributing to the worlds' weave and texture', is a process of transformation and evolution. We are designed by our own designing (Willis 2006). It is a circular movement that, in fact, we can never really step outside of this 'dance' of designing. And such processes of design leave traces. These traces are physical, ephemeral and conceptual things we discard to move forward, like lines on a paper, a thought expressed vocally, or writings on a post-it note. These traces are also internal – feelings, experiences and thoughts that we embody and absorb as we design, which in turn, loop outwards into the world. Ingold likens this to a spider's web, spun from the materials exuded from the spider's body and are laid down as it moves

and weaves its home. 'They are lines along which it lives, and conduct its perception and action in the world' (Ingold 2010, p. 12). These are just such lines of transforming, growing, developing, becoming. Co-designing interweaves the experiences and knowing gathered through an immersion into a context. This act of transformation is a co-created process, not just between people, but a co-creation that interweaves the specificities and materiality of the place in which designing is taking place. We are constantly 'being' and 'becoming' through this transformative act. Designing services we are engaged in designing ourselves, people and the world around us in an on-going process.

#### CONCLUSION

By looking closely at how methods are performed by practitioners, we can begin to focus our attention to the active power of the processual aspects of the creation of services. The very essence of a phenomenological position is to emphasise the transformative, the reflective and the becoming. The Geovation co-designing workshop offered a site of deep immersion and reflection for the MDes students. It enabled an opportunity, out of an academically-supported environment, for a multidisciplinary collaboration

with people who were unfamiliar to the practices of co-designing. Reflecting on Ingold's work may help us with this metaphorical 'mould-breaking' in how we preconceive methods and artefacts. As design researchers, it is our responsibility to curb our tendencies to detach methods from enactment, embedment and performance, and remind ourselves to re-stitch it back into the 'meshwork' of living, re-connected to the lives and contexts of people, places and time. Integrating Ingold's perspective in service design and using phenomenology as a guidance could help us remove our blinkers and see what extends beyond, and falls in-between, the cracks. In fact, co-designing is a powerful reminder because it cannot be enacted without this connection. In our case study, the OS Geovation Challenge became the site where students were learning and practicing this connection. Being immersed in this context, and through listening and teasing out tacit knowledge, it fostered an empathic, deeper involvement between people. It allowed a collective creativity that supported divergent views interwoven from the stories of everyday experiences. Co-designing enables us to value the contribution from everyone and everything, no matter how incidental, in the overall weaving of life.

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**STEFANO MAFFEI**

Associate Professor,  
Department of Design,  
School of Design,  
Politecnico di Milano, Italia

**BEATRICE VILLARI**

Assistant Professor,  
Department of Design,  
School of Design,  
Politecnico di Milano, Italia

**FRANCESCA FOGLIENI**

Ph.D Student,  
Department of Design,  
School of Design,  
Politecnico di Milano, Italia

*Embedding design capacity in public organisations*

# EVALUATION BY DESIGN FOR PUBLIC SERVICES

Exploring the need of a culture of service assessment

BY STEFANO MAFFEI, BEATRICE VILLARI & FRANCESCA FOGLIENI

## ABSTRACT

The paper reflects about the need to introduce and develop approaches and tools for public services evaluation. Starting from the acknowledgment that investments in public services has dramatically increased over the last decade, we could state that they must also respond to new varieties of societal challenges and rising demands coming from service users. This pressure makes a strong push upon innovation considering that, if services must be designed to meet the complex needs of users, they also must reach a high rate of delivering cost efficiency.

This article proposes an approach based on qualitative and quantitative measurements throughout the whole service design process in which service evaluation may represent a tool for value creation and a driver for innovation in public sector.

Considering the emerging interest on evaluating design and innovation (OECD, 2010; European Commission, 2012) the authors try to explore existing evaluation methods for services in public sector, in order to define an evaluation framework that could support new innovation patterns.

## INTRODUCTION

Public services are a central question for governments and policy makers that have to face the increasing amount of public expenditure and have the necessity to reduce costs (Design Commission, 2013). In most of the OECD countries, public investments have been strongly reduced (OECD, 2011) forcing the governments to restructure their role with the imperative of *doing better with less* (money, human resources) (Colligan, 2011). In this problematic context, innovation becomes fundamental to improve the public sector efficiency and to define new ways of organizing, providing and delivering services. Moreover governments and public bodies need new processes and tools to foresee and manage risks in investments and rapidly adapt to the changing conditions.

## INNOVATION IN PUBLIC SERVICES

Innovation is an important issue for both public and private sector organizations. Till now literature on innovation in the public sector mainly derives from that in the private one, which largely focuses on technological and product improvement, highlighting the limitations in applying it to service and organizational innovation, typical of the public sector (Hartley, 2005).

Services are what products are not (Vargo, Lusch, 2004). They are intangible and distributed in time and space. They

cannot be owned, stored or perish. Services are consumed as they are produced and sold, and the customer typically needs to be present for the service to be delivered (Shostack, 1982; Manzini, 1993; Kimbell, 2009; Meroni, Sangiorgi, 2012).

When it is referred to public sector, innovation is defined as new ideas aimed at creating public value (Mulgan, 2007). It requires a change in the relationship between service providers and users and judgements have to be made about processes, impacts and outcomes, as well as products (Hartley, 2005).

There are important differences between public and private sector innovation. Innovation in the latter is driven primarily by competitive advantage tending to restrict the sharing of good practice to strategic partners. By contrast, the drivers in the public sector are to achieve widespread improvements in governance and service performance in order to increase public value (Moore, 1995).

Nevertheless, in the contemporary service-dominant logic (Vargo and Lusch, 2008) in both private and public sector, the customer is the main creator of value (Holmlid, 2010) and innovation requires a systematic approach, where the process of change and its enabling factors are understood, as well as the users' needs (OECD, 2011).

If service innovation derives from a planned process and requires a disciplined approach to rigorously identify and execute the most promising ideas, the right development process, the right level of risk management, the right target, etc. (Jones and Samalionis, 2008), then firms and countries need to develop strategies to facilitate it. Involving citizens and stakeholders in decision making to offer creative solutions, enabling organisations to provide better services (OECD, 2009), improving the productivity of services reducing their cost, or supporting the use and the diffusion of digital technologies (OECD, 2011).

To reach these purposes, public leaders need to know how to match the delivery (quantity and quality) of services - given the resources available - to society expectations (OECD, 2011). Moreover, they need to consider new government forms based on transparency and inclusion, where strategies and performances evaluation will be also crucial (OECD, 2009).

Notwithstanding the measurement of service qualitative-quantitative aspects is not defined and the relatively tight and rigorous methodologies typically used in other disciplinary fields may not be always applicable to service innovation (Blomkvist and Holmlid, 2010). Hence, new approaches and methods should be developed.

## PUBLIC SERVICES NEED TO BE DESIGNED

Design is a discipline which shapes ideas to become practical and attractive propositions for users and customers (Cox, 2005).

It is commonly recognised that design as a corporate activity is part of the innovation process (Freeman 1982; Roy and Bruce, 1984).

During the last decades there has been a shift towards a more strategic view of design: it is considered as an essential activity for user-centered innovation (OECD, 1992), as a value that precedes the business one (Holmlid, 2010). This is particularly true when referring to the public sector, where innovation is aimed at generating public value.

Design as a driver of innovation is strengthening its role in service industries and in the public sector also thanks to the consolidating discipline of service design (Commission of the European Communities, 2009).

Service design is a collaborative activity incorporating many disciplines with a bundle of skills and practices (Mager, 2004; Thackara, 2007). In public sector a great deal of service design happens without any professional design input (Commission of the European Communities, 2009). Most of public managers and insiders ignore how to add basic design methods to their activities and processes. Neither they know when and how to introduce professional designers (Brown, 2009). The benefits of service design are not yet sufficiently perceived by public actors. Similarly, investors often do not know how to evaluate design projects and design-driven activities (Commission of the European Communities, 2009). But public services, as well as the others, must be designed in order to meet the user needs, the efficacy of the performance, the quality of the offer, and the cost efficiencies.

Recent evidences show that design approaches can drive innovation even in public services (Design Council, 2008): for example service design methods like prototyping are useful to define problems at early stage, before significant public funding is committed and media attention is attracted (Jones and Samalionis, 2008).

In UK, interesting experiences about service design-led innovation in public services are supported by the Design Council and Nesta.

Over the last few years, Design Council has piloted a range of public sector projects, to support the role of service design in public services. One of them, the Move Me project in Northumberland region, has improved transport systems in a small rural community by creating a toolkit for service providers<sup>1</sup>.

Moreover Nesta has designed People Powered Health programme to support the design and delivery of innovative services for people living with long term health conditions<sup>2</sup>, through patients involvement in developing and delivering their own care.

Both represent an innovative and potentially radical intervention in public services and demonstrate that design can generate cost and organisational benefits.

Despite these cases, there is a lack of evaluation tools and methods available to institutions and citizens supporting the adoption of service design in a systematic way and subsequently to foster service innovation (European Commission, 2012).

## DESIGN EVALUATION AND EVALUATION BY DESIGN IN THE PUBLIC SECTOR

Innovation does not always lead to success, but it is useful to learn about and understand failing innovations, as well as successful ones. The failures may help to understand the innovation process, its barriers and enabling factors (Hartley, 2005).

This is the purpose of evaluation: to understand how good or bad activities, projects, products, services are working in order to better comprehend what is going wrong and then improve it (Bezzi, 2007). A company that does not manage the customer evaluation in producing goods and services will not generate sales (Holmlid, 2010).

Evaluation can help designing and generating value, but needs to be designed in turn.

In recent years, there has been increasing pressure on design to show meaningful results, not only in raising interest on design discipline, but also in making a significant contribution to national development (Raulik et al. 2008) through guidelines and evaluation methods (Palfrey, Thomas, Phillips, 2012). Before introducing the issues about service evaluation, a clarification is needed, describing the differences between *design evaluation* and *evaluation by design*.

The term *design evaluation* refers to design practice evaluation at micro and macro scale i.e. applied to individual firms and specific public policies or to a larger scale, namely to a national system scale. The EU is promoting some significant experiences related to these issues (EDII -

1. Case study available at: [www.dott07.com/go/public-commissions/move-me](http://www.dott07.com/go/public-commissions/move-me)
2. Case study available at: [http://www.nesta.org.uk/areas\\_of\\_work/public\\_services\\_lab/health\\_and\\_ageing/people\\_powered\\_health](http://www.nesta.org.uk/areas_of_work/public_services_lab/health_and_ageing/people_powered_health)
3. [http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/policies/innovation/policy/design-creativity/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/policies/innovation/policy/design-creativity/index_en.htm)

European Design Innovation Initiative<sup>3</sup>), such as the DeEP Project, which explores the opportunities to fill the lack of evaluation in design innovation policies defining specific frameworks and tools ([www.deepinitiative.eu](http://www.deepinitiative.eu)).

Always concerning the growing recognition that design helps both companies and nations compete, recent research led by the University of Cambridge has attempted to produce an *International Design Scoreboard* (Moultrie and Livesey, 2009), providing a proof of principle to measure design at national level.

The term *evaluation by design* refers to design-led evaluation methods applied to design products and services. If there is a rising tradition of measuring and comparing aspects of national competitiveness related to design, to date there has been no comprehensive collation of available data for evaluating design performance in services (Moultrie and Livesey, 2009). As a matter of fact, the *International Design Scoreboard* outlines that data on the design services sector is typically not available through any national statistics agencies.

In spite of the existence of a British Standard guide (BS-7000 part 3 “Guide to Managing Service Design”) aiming at educating service providers to the importance of total design, service design is still not managed in an organised manner.

For this reason we are going to focus on *evaluation by design*, as a medium to give evidence to the service design value for improving innovation.

Referring to that, the *Magenta Book* (HM Treasury, 2011) provides a guidance on how evaluation should be designed and undertaken for public policies, programmes and projects and presents standards of good practice in conducting evaluations. It states that a good evaluation can provide

*“reliable understanding of which interventions work and are effective. [...] Developing an evaluation plan at an early stage will help to ensure that all the important steps have been considered”* (HM Treasury, 2011:12).

A further approach is given by *Project Oracle* ([www.project-oracle.com](http://www.project-oracle.com)), a London-based endeavour to bring evaluations of youth programmes. It is attempting to change the mindset of public providers, together with the wider community of decision makers and funders, in order to signal the importance of good evidence and to stimulate a demand for it (Ilic and Puttick, 2012).

*Evaluation by design* is certainly an important issue, long

overdue, that deserves public attention.

Starting from the existing evaluation approaches, the authors’ purpose is to describe an on-going reflection about an evaluation framework for services.

#### EVALUATING PUBLIC SERVICES: A FRAMEWORK FOR SERVICE DESIGNERS AND PUBLIC ACTORS

As the previous paragraph shows, making better use of evidence is essential if public services are to deliver *more for less* (Nutley, Powell and Davies, 2013). The UK Civil Service Reform Plan (HM Government, 2012) suggests that there is a need for an improved infrastructure to trial and assess what works in major public areas, aiming at ensuring that governments have the evidence to support effective commissioning.

By defining an evaluation framework for services, the authors hypothesize how this needed infrastructure should be.

Starting from a service design approach, which includes actions to unveil opportunities, produce ideas, solve problems and create implementable solutions (Goldstein et al. 2002; Moritz, 2005), we can assume that evaluation process have to consider the different steps of the service design process, from the ideation to the final delivery.

The hypothesis is to consider the evaluation through three design levels (strategic, development, execution). These correspond to different focus of evaluation regarding *enabling conditions* (the resources needed to operate your program), the *inputs* (namely the design activities), the *outputs* (the service delivery results) and the *impact* (related to the long term perspective).

The idea is to shift the service evaluation focus from functional characteristics, technical components, flow of processes and relationships, to the potential impact (social, economic, organizational, educational) that services can have on individuals, communities and organizations, offering new patterns of behaviour and interaction (Anderson in Ostrom et al., 2010).

As the *Magenta Book* outlines (HM Treasury, 2011:39) there are number of stages in planning and undertaking an evaluation. A first important step is to define a *logic model* to design the evaluation process, analysing data and interpreting results.

Referring to the Kellogg Foundation (2004) *logic model* for innovation, a set of indicators could be used to describe the framework (see Figure 1), coming from the discipline involved in service design process like management,



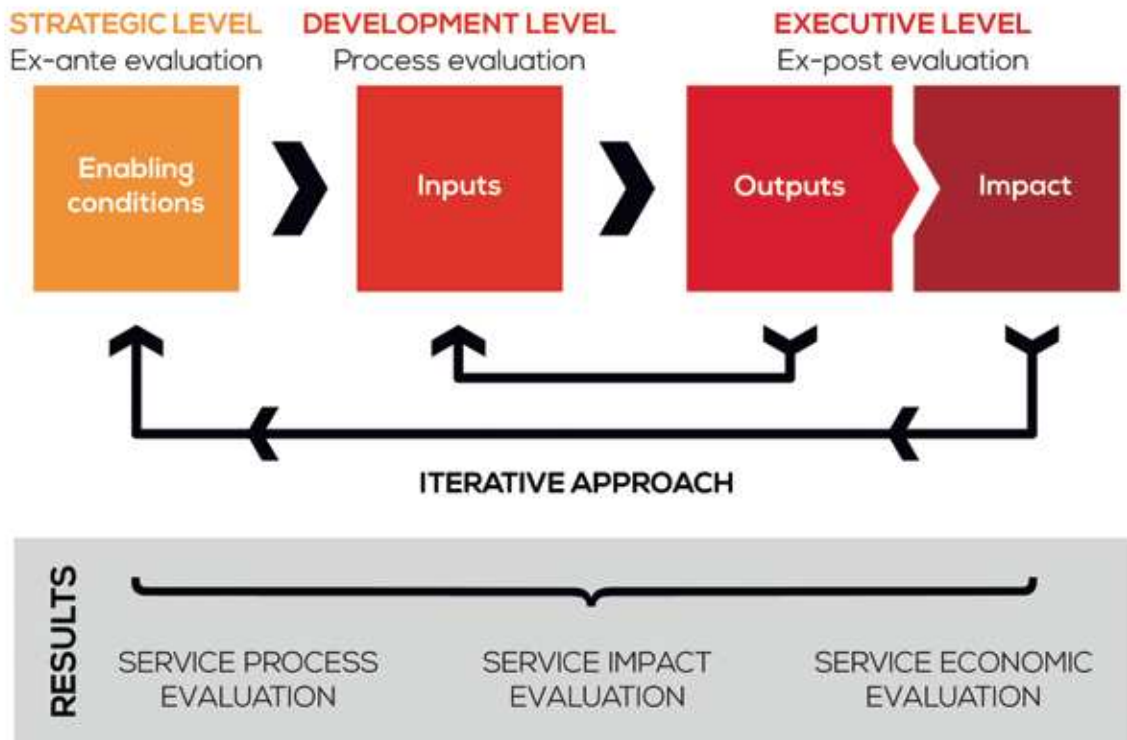


Figure 1: Service evaluation framework by service design

psychology, marketing, architecture, engineering, ethnography (Mager, 2004; Moritz, 2005; Schneider and Stickdorn, 2012).

Indicators have to be developed to help organisations and service providers answer some key questions like: what key outcomes have we achieved? How well do we meet the needs of our users? How do people use the service? How good is our delivery of services? How good is our leadership? What is our capacity for improvement?

At the strategic level – the ex-ante evaluation useful to understand the context in which services will be developed – indicators are related to the *enabling conditions*. These could evaluate for example the quality of the leadership, the participation of the community, the efficiency of the organization, the use of technology. To define indicators at this level, techniques derived from market and management studies like benchmarking and technology foresight should be considered, in addition to other qualitative analysis like surveys, focus group and interviews.

At the development level – which monitors the design

process – indicators are related to the *inputs*, hence the public organization capacities to design and develop the service. In this case indicators could state for example the knowing of the user needs, the centrality of the user in the process, the interaction between user and organization, the quality of the communication evidences. At this stage service design tools like stakeholders maps, service prototypes, cultural probes (Schneider and Stickdorn, 2012) should be useful to set the indicators, as well as techniques like *Customer Journey Mapping* (HM Government, 2007).

At the execution level – the evaluation of the service delivery and the ex-post evaluation – indicators are related both to *outputs* and *impact*. The *outputs* are the direct result of the design activity and coincide with user perception of the service. The *impact* of the service has implications at different levels and in a long-term perspective, (social, economic, political, educational, organization). Quantitative indicators here could come from management methods like *Cost Benefit Analysis*; qualitative indicators instead could be inspired by customer satisfaction surveys or the *Bottom-line*

*Experiences* method provided by Live|Work<sup>4</sup>.

The results of the evaluation process produced by the framework refer to:

- a service process evaluation, including the collection of qualitative and quantitative data from different stakeholders considering the different elements of the service system (organizations, physical evidences, quality of interactions and so on);
- a service impact evaluation, demonstrating the added value of the service provided, related to a specific context and target;
- a service economic, evaluation measuring the outputs/outcomes generated by the service using quantitative data.

The approach described is iterative; hence outputs of early activities can become inputs for later processes, as well as outcomes can become strategies. Moreover, it needs to be further explored to suit different situations and organisational structures, to better define tools and indicators and to adapt its applications to public services or other service sectors.

#### FINAL REMARKS

Focusing on service evaluation creates new research opportunities related to the service innovation issues. The framework proposed suits the decision makers' need of a descriptive evidence about social problems, why they occur, and which groups and individuals are most at risk. Evaluating public services could help decision makers in understanding why, when and for whom services work, and whether there are any unintended side-effects to be considered together with costs, distributional effects, risks and consequences.

From a design point of view, the adoption of a more systemic service assessment process could increase providers and users awareness on the importance of service innovation and quality. It could even facilitate the evaluation of the service outputs and the impacts, finally enabling the capacity to understand the real effectiveness of intangible elements.

Furthermore, the spread of a culture of service assessment may expand the demand of a service design excellence for those providers that traditionally have never minded design, for those that still do not know its potential as a driver of innovation, and for other actors, such as institutions, organizations, educational systems or individual citizens.

4. See Bottom-line Experiences: Measuring the Value of Design in Service (Lavrans Lovlie, Chris Downs, Ben Reason), DMI Review Article, Vol. 19, No. 1, Winter 2008

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This section presents dissertations and books in the design field. Have you read something that you think *Design Research Journal* should write about? If so, e-mail us at: [designresearchjournal@svid.se](mailto:designresearchjournal@svid.se).

## On innovative leadership



### SERVICE DESIGN LEADERSHIP

Doktorsavhandling

Author: Judith Gloppen

Publisher: AHO, Oslo, 2012

In December 2012 Judith Gloppen defended her thesis on *Service Design Leadership* at the Oslo School of Architecture and Design (AHO). The thesis aims to define a framework for service design leadership, one that can be used to understand partly what service design involves, and partly how design can be used in practice and within a service context. The thesis and book is a compilation and consists of three articles published in various scientific journals, including one article in *Design Research Journal* (# 1/2010). In addition to the articles, the thesis consists of a comprehensive summary: a discussion of the problems that led to the research topic, a description of the implementation of a number of

workshops, an analysis of the literature in the field of design management and service design, and a final discussion and conclusions.

Gloppen has experience as the manager of two major design projects – the Lillehammer Olympics and the Flytoget express train between Oslo and Gardemoen Airport. This experience is her starting point for discussing various practical problems in service design and in integrating design into organisations that lack experience of it. The results presented in her thesis are based on the analysis of the series of workshops in which AT-ONE, a special method for the innovation of services, was used. Gloppen took part in these workshops as a researcher/observer and followed up by interviewing the participants.

The AT-ONE method was developed by Simon Clatworthy, who is also a researcher at AHO, with the aim of developing innovative services in the first phase of the development process. The aim is the same as that of design processes in general: to increase the level of innovations and creativity in participating managers. Those who took part in the series of workshops were interviewed by Gloppen not only to evaluate the method's usefulness but also to explore the participants' experience of the design process and of service innovation. The result, encompassing the integration of organisation, creativity, service design and a design approach, is a synthesis that is important for leadership and capacity in service innovation, especially in the preliminary (front-end) phases of service innovation. The book gives a good insight into what service design involves and what type of leadership is required. In particular there is a discussion about the need for 'T-created' individuals – that is, people with a deep knowledge of a specific field (the upright line) and also a good ability to both work together with

people who have another speciality and to implement their knowledge (the crossbar).

Both the projects and method are interesting, which is the strength of the book/thesis. Much of the book is written from a practitioner's point of view rather than an academic's. As a result, the theoretical and scientific part of the text perhaps lacks critical discussion and reflection – even though there is a good description of the literature on design management and service design. The topic of service design has received academic attention for a long time now but it seems that practitioners have not recognised the advantages that the design process and design approach also offer to the development of services. There could have been a bit more discussion about leadership and management as such. The focus now is on design and design management so that managers can learn more about areas they probably lack knowledge about. For designers it would have been interesting to have a little more written about leadership theories in relation to service design in order to understand why it is actually difficult and complicated to integrate design. But the book provides a good insight for practitioners who want to apply innovative leadership for services and the design methods and approach used here.

Lisbeth Svengren-Holm

## Examining trends as a concept

"The concept of a trend can be so many things: a movement, a mood, a general feeling that people have," says fashion designer Erdem Moralioglu in Jenny Lantz's newly published book *Trendmakarna* (The Trendsetters). Something emerges more or less by chance and gradually seeps down to the general public, he says. Lantz con-





### TRENDMAKARNA (The trendsetters)

Author: Jenny Lantz

Publisher: Atlas akademi, 2013

cludes that Moralioglu is not at all concerned with the concept of trends for his own use but rather “has an artist’s relationship to his domain.” She also refuses to define ‘trend’ in the introduction to the book. So, too, do most of the many people who speak out in the book, even though they often take the word into their mouth and often have decided views on the advantages and disadvantages of trends.

Jenny Lantz is a researcher at the Stockholm School of Economics. In 2005 she defended her thesis entitled *Taste at Work*. *Trendmakarna* is the result of her research project into trends and organisation in the field of fashion, which was funded by the Swedish Research Council. The book has as its subtitle *Bakom kulisserna på den globala modeindustrin* (Behind the Scenes of the Global Fashion Industry) and is based on almost 100 interviews with people in the fashion industry, from designers to investors, PR experts and employees of trends agencies.

Unfortunately the book contains a number of repetitions; for instance the theory that trends function as organising principles and stabiliser within

the fashion world recurs in several chapters. So some editing would not have hurt. The author’s analyses and conclusions are interspersed with long direct quotations, something that at times feels unnecessarily verbose. On the other hand, this use of direct speech also creates an immediacy and sense of presence that is quite enjoyable.

The book makes it clear that the fashion industry is extremely difficult to grasp. Everyone has their own interpretation and descriptions of who is in charge and where developments are heading. Many people argue that the time for trends has passed; others that such a claim is also a trend in itself. Though consensus does exist on a couple of points, such as the influence of the internet. Today trends spread via the internet. For instance, a website like Moda Operandi can enable anyone at all to buy a garment that has just been shown on the catwalk. Buyers can skip over the purchaser stage of the chain; the concept becomes a reality. Yes, it costs a lot but it is possible.

The status of trends as a concept has fallen more and more in the industry. Most of those interviewed also agree on this. And that trends are not replacing each other completely nowadays but rather living side by side for a longer period of time even though the total number of collections per year has gone up.

Lantz says that the ideas of French sociologist *Pierre Bourdieu* are still relevant. There are many references to him. Similarly, *Roland Barthes*’ term ‘neomania’ is still applicable: humans’ inherent longing for change is the basic force driving fashion changes. But Lantz also describes other economic and cultural forces that are important in this context.

For instance, she devotes much space to the big commercial trends agencies. The chapter on the BRIC countries is particularly interesting as it clarifies some contexts involving

fashion’s imperialistic nature.

*Trendmakarna* is thus not a simplified description of the global fashion industry. On the contrary, it spans several disciplines: sociology, economics, management and politics. As well as production and design, of course.

Lotta Jonson

## On creativity

*Ting i rörelse* (Objects in Motion) is a small inspirational publication of just over 100 pages in which three designers (among others) speak out. *Anna Kraitz*, *Dan Ihreborn* and *Mats Thesilius* all practice their profession but have partly differing experiences. The author is *Karin Havemose*, instructor and researcher at the School of Engineering at Jönköping University. The book is aimed at students, instructors and practitioners in the field of design and other creative professions. The interviews mix the high with the low: manual work, Montaigne’s essays and the search for the magic creative touch, and provoke many thoughts about the relationship between humans and objects.

Lotta Jonson



### TING I RÖRELSE (Objects in motion)

Author: Karin Havemose

Publisher: Santérus Förlag, 2012

## Encouraging dialogue at the design conference on the future

April 17–19, 2013, the School of Design and Crafts (HDK) at the University of Gothenburg hosted the 10th European Academy of Design Conference, *Crafting the Future*. The annual event drew a record turnout. Nearly 300 scholars, researchers, and practitioners from Europe and beyond presented and discussed what design will be in years to come.

The conference theme revolved around a central question: “How can the specific knowledge of designers be brought forward, articulated, made visible, and be understood and used in contexts like innovation, business development and social change?” It included tracks for papers as diverse as, Designing Future Mobility, Design and Innovation, and Fashion Design for Sustainability.

### THE ORGANISATIONAL THEORY GURU

After a mesmerizing introduction featuring musical research, organizational theory guru *Mary Jo Hatch* took the stage to give the initial keynote. Known for her work on Jazz as a metaphor for leading and organization,

Hatch highlighted the need to recognize the overlap between intuitive logic inherent in the practices of art and design, and rational logic prevalent in the world of business and management. Indeed, Hatch’s keynote set the tone for a conference that would continuously highlight innovative connections between historical and contemporary practices in design and management theory.

Hatch was followed by a number of provocative keynote addresses that alluded to a future that will engage – or perhaps reinvigorate – discussions surrounding the value of

long-held skills and methods of crafts, juxtaposed with the demand for an understanding of the technologies and systems that influence our work with the artificial world. As *Clive Dilnot*, professor of Design Studies at Parsons School of Design, proclaimed in describing his definition of the current phase of human history, The Age of the Artificial: “made things are studies of the possible...and design is where this feat is taken seriously.”

### HARD TO CHOSE BETWEEN THE PRESENTATIONS

The expansive notion of design invoked by the keynote speakers was further enhanced through the paper sessions. While each track exhibited its own unique flavor – often making it challenging to choose between two enticing, but overlapping presentations – a few overarching themes emerged: the relationship between business and design practices; the methods, tools, and competencies of designers; and the role design plays in organisations, communities, and even countries.

Some of the most interesting experiences of the conference came from bouncing between tracks. In one afternoon session, discussions about design methods based on exploration, play and imagination took place right next door to a detailed analysis of how people without a design background behave using digital design toolkits.

Two workshops provided a break from the mentally taxing stream of scholarly presentations. *Crafting Play:ces*, explored how craft can support participation and activate public space. Throughout the conference, students recruited passersby to create forms and structures by interweaving tree branches. Just down the street in the Glashuset, master’s students from HDK’s Business and Design Lab hosted *Biking the Future*, an “experience lab” where people explored the bicycle as a metaphor for



Two of the keynote speakers at *Crafting the Future*.  
Above: Clive Dilnot, Parsons School of Design.  
Right: Mary Jo Hatch, organisational theory guru.



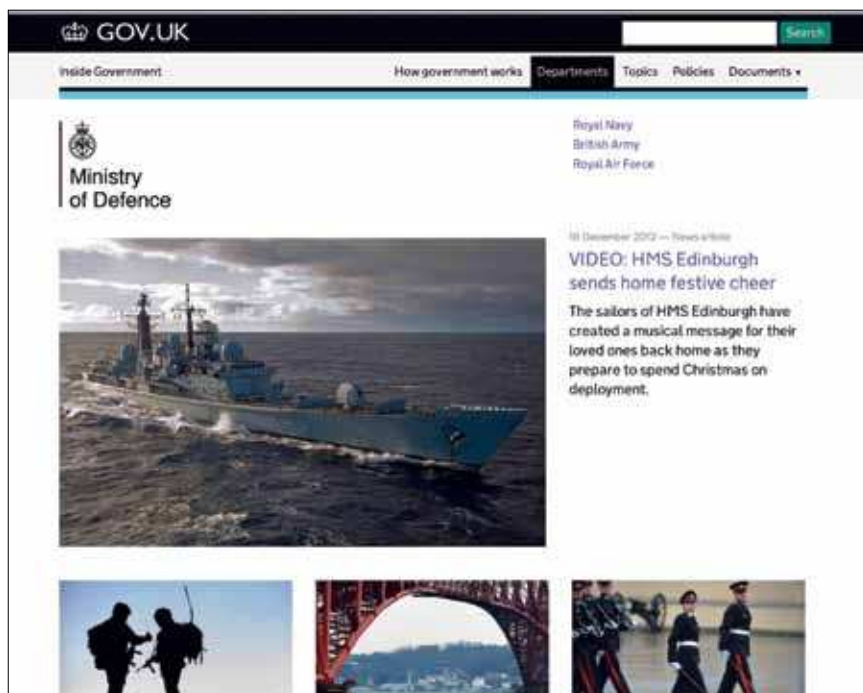
social phenomena. Both workshops proved to be accessible and enjoyable, as conference attendees dropped in and mingled through the engaging creative activities.

### DESIGN MAY BE REGARDED AS A PROCESS OF CRAFTING

Overall, *Crafting the Future* encouraged a healthy dialogue among disciplines that will continue to push and pull the boundaries of design for years to come. As suggested by the title of the conference, and exhibited by the content of its presentations, the future of both design and society may very well be thought of as a process of crafting — enacted at the European Academy of Design through the creative, inclusive, and critical discourse that it promotes.

Andrew Whitcomb

PS. For a full listing of the tracks and papers visit the conference website at [www.craftingthefuture.se](http://www.craftingthefuture.se).



## Service design at a governmental level

More than a year ago *Mat Hunter*, Chief Design Officer at the Design Council in London, proudly described the revamp that the UK government had decided to make of its website, Gov.uk.

The focus was to be on the user and it would be simple and obvious for everyone to use the website to enjoy their basic democratic rights and obligations. Even people with no computer experience would be able to understand with a simple mouse click

how to find information and help at the site.

In mid-April came the official recognition: Design of the Year 2013. Each year the Design Museum in London awards prizes for the year's best designs in seven different categories, including architecture, transport, furniture, digital solutions, etc. An overall winner is selected from among the seven category winners. This year it was Gov.uk, which the prize organisers described as service design at the highest level.

The director of the Design Museum, Deyan Sudjic, commented at the award ceremony:

"Gov.uk ... makes life better for millions of people coping with the everyday chores, from getting a new passport, to paying their taxes.... Gov.uk looks elegant, and subtly British.... It is the Paul Smith (a British icon in men's fashion) of websites. The rest of the world is deeply impressed."

*Lotta Jonson*

The typeface used on Gov.uk is a revised version of a classic from the 1960s designed by Margaret Calvert. Anyone can go and check out whether the praise for the website is justified. See more at [www.designmuseum.org](http://www.designmuseum.org).



## The end for HDL

Since 2008 the state-financed Finnish Innovation Fund Sitra has funded a department of strategic design with the platform of the Helsinki Design Lab (HDL). At the lab attempts have been made to incorporate designers and design methodology into important decision-making processes in a non-bureaucratic way. One of the most important tasks has also been to keep an eye on sustainability issues and low energy solutions. But now the lab's operations have come to an end, at least in their present guise. HDL is closing with a one-day seminar in Helsinki (10 June) and a final report that will sum up the various experiences from the past four years.

Marco Steinberg, who was head of HDL says in his farewell letter ([www.helsinkidesignlab.org/moimoi](http://www.helsinkidesignlab.org/moimoi)):

"To some, closing may be interpreted as failure, but to us it's the realization that HDL has accomplished what it set out to do: to demonstrate that design can play a valuable part of strategic decision making.... As all good undertakings come to an end, they invariably make room for newer and better things. The next steps we all take together."

This sounds cryptic but he goes on to explain that he will work with strategic design in future too but outside Sitra. Where and with what is as yet unknown. Nor can we determine from the information made public to date exactly how Sitra will work with design issues and research in the design field in future.

Marco Steinberg



FOTO: SAMI KULJU

## Furthering design via BEDA

Robin Edman, CEO of SVID, has been chosen as vice president of BEDA, an association of about 40 design organisations in Europe.

"Now that the mandate for the European Design Leadership Board has run out and the final report (*Design for Growth & Prosperity*) has been delivered, we must ensure that interest in design is kept alive within the European Commission. I want BEDA to take over and drive design issues further," Edman says.

He adds that those people who are working with innovation issues

within the EU have a better idea of the potential of the design field today than even just a few years ago but it is important now not to let this interest that has been cultivated die down.

"I hope that in future BEDA will be able to present even more arguments proving that the use of design pays off," he says. "The EU-funded projects being implemented throughout Europe, some of which are being done by BEDA members, are about finding methods to measure the effects of design. The projects will conclude in June 2014. We hope to then have more facts on

the table – facts that the European Commission cannot ignore in its future innovation policies."



Robin Edman, CEO of SVID and vice president of BEDA.

## The 'Andro Chair' – critical design as an eye-opener

Real or just pretend? A provocation, perhaps? Recently the Androstolen, or 'Andro Chair' was presented. It is a gynaecological examination chair for men with a design based on women's experiences.

It looks like an instrument of torture, thought a number of people in the audience of the launch seminar held at the Museum of Architecture in Stockholm. Maybe so. With its angular stainless steel front it looks very uncomfortable and the roll of paper also creates unpleasant associations.

The name of the chair is based on the word 'andrology', that is, the science of men as biological beings (Wikipedia). However, the creation of the chair was not only a matter of simplified prostate examinations but also of questioning some designs. Like those constructed only according to men's measurements even though the end result will often be used by at least as many women as men. Sara Ilstedt, professor of product and service design at KTH Royal Institute of Technology, pointed this out in her speech. One

concrete example she mentioned was the first mobile telephones.

"When I phoned my husband using my phone he always got worried. He thought something had happened – that I was sad. That was because the first mobile phones could not process the frequencies of women's voices."

The development group at Ericsson had consisted solely of men. Much has happened since then but everyday objects are still often coded with subconscious gender markers. By analysing the objects through gender eyeglasses we can discover the values in society.

"The Andro Chair is an example of critical design and the result of a kind of design research that can make visible precisely such gender-related values," Ilstedt said.

The male gynaecological examination chair was developed within a project called Hälsoformer & tekniknormer (Forms of Health & Technological Norms) funded partly by Vinnova and implemented at Halmstad University and its Health Technology Centre of Halland (HCH). Since it opened in the autumn of 2009 the

centre has worked actively to integrate a gender perspective in its activities. Karin Ehrnberger, an industrial designer and researcher, and Cristine Sundbom, an industrial designer and assistant nurse, have been in charge. Some of the questions they tried to answer are: Whose needs are actually prioritised in product development and what role does gender play in this? How can a gender perspective make visible neglected needs and lead to development and innovation? How does gender and design research help to raise these issues?

A range of experts in several fields had been brought together at the seminar. All of them agreed that to work in practice, the Andro Chair needs further refinements in terms of its form but that its mere existence can spark off many interesting discussions. Though that of course requires that people can deal with a variety of instinctive reactions. For examples, see these reactions expressed on [flashback.org](http://flashback.org): "Crazy feminists have designed a chair aimed at making men uncomfortable.... I don't know if this should be characterised as hatred of



## Design awards

Martin Magnusson & Co, Hestra, were the happy winners of the Swedish design prize Stora Designpriset 2013 (The Grand Award of Design) for their sports gloves for skiing and more. Half of the EUR 29,000 prize money will be donated to research in the field. The jury statement: "Martin Magnusson & Co are glovemakers who, by inviting professional users to take part in the design process, have turned the family-owned company into a commercial success story and Hestra into a strong global brand."

Stora Designpriset is awarded

to Swedish companies that have achieved business success with the help of persistent design efforts. On the Stora Designpriset Facebook page visitors have voted for "The Public's Favourite" from among the finalists. The winner is the super-light wheelchair Panthera X designed by Gestalt Industriell Design. Other finalists were Veryday's cooking stove Ezystove and the portable synthesizer OP-1.

Hestra Gloves  
and Panthera X.



## Important membership

The Swedish School of Textiles at the University of Borås has joined the Sustainable Apparel Coalition (SAC), an association of some 80 major manufacturers of textiles and fashion. Members include H&M, Adidas, Zara and Nike. SAC's vision is to create a fashion and footwear industry without any unnecessary impact on the environment but with a positive impact on people and society. The goal is to create a shared view of sustainability issues, and find a common method of communicating measurements of sustainability. The School is one of four educational institutions in the world to be chosen to join SAC so far.

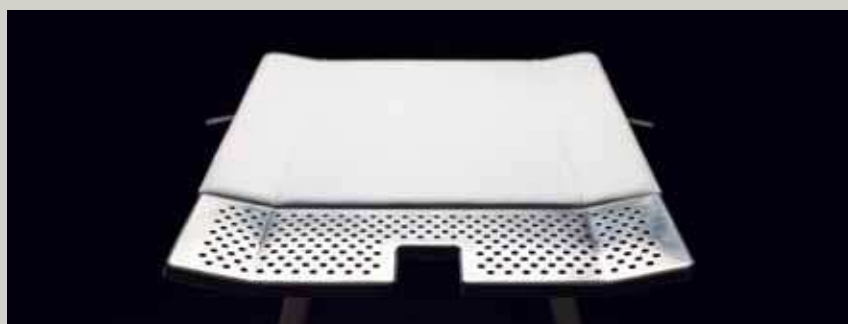
"Among other things, our membership gives us access to a large network of contacts in the industry," says *Jonas Larsson* of the Swedish School of Textiles.

## Upcoming action plan

The first Cumulus conference in Sweden is held in Kalmar from 5 to 8 June. The theme is *Global Thinking – Local Action – Future Life*. The focus of the event was sustainability. Global climate conferences have shown meagre results, so this time the hosts want to work in a different way with a number of different workshops led by such names as *Ezio Manzini*.

In early autumn 2013 the conference results will be boiled down to an action plan to be published and presented at the political level. Design Research Journal hopes to revisit this topic.

Ezio Manzini



The Andro Chair partly poses the question as to why andrology is not as self-evident as gynaecology. Partly the chair points out how little positive response there has been so far to women's negative experiences of gynaecology clinics. The chair can also spark off discussions about how gender more or less subconsciously influences the design process.



men, a waste of time or a waste of money. I think that the design fulfils a therapeutic function for women who suffer from a hatred of men and other psychological problems."

Such opinions are expressed even though the chair is actually designed from how physicians have described in interviews how prostate examinations are done and what could be an advantageous position from a medical standpoint, as *Ehrnberger* and *Sundbom* explain.

So it is a realistic proposal. And a provocation.

*Lotta Jonson*

## An inspiring "Mission: The User"

"Today's problems are not solvable by using the same kind of logic as that which created them." With this statement *Marco Steinberg* (then still director of the Finnish Innovation Fund Sitra's department of Strategic Design with Helsinki Design Lab) began an interesting speech on health and innovation. He spoke at "Mission: The User", a day of inspiration that attracted some 150 participants and was arranged by SVID in February. Steinberg's presentation was to a great extent a challenge to the audience to take a contrarian approach and to use design to do so. One small but telling example he gave was the slogan often used by the city of Helsinki: "a fine place to live in".

"Replace that with 'a fine place to die in'. Then something happens. Both in our imagination but also in our view of how things can be improved and changed," he said.

*Richard Bracken*, project manager at Handisam, an agency that "coordinates, expedites and follows up policies regarding functional

impairment" described his design experiences from the Hjärnkoll project.

"The design methodology has given me a taste for more as well as new perspectives on my work," he said. (See Design Research Journal # 2.12.)

*Helena Jönsson* of Centek at Luleå University of Technology spoke enthusiastically about service design in the tourism industry. She called it "destination design" and said it involved finding out the uniqueness of a location and then designing activities etc. based on that. "It's time to design Norrbotten – to develop a region" was the title of her talk, which was about a project called Designarena Nord (Design Arena North), which involves developing the Norrbotten region with the help of design and design methodology. The three-year project is partly funded by the EU.

"For the northern municipalities it's all about turning out-migration into in-migration. This involves focusing on the residents and starting to care about the local area. Fixing broken signs, for instance, makes a huge

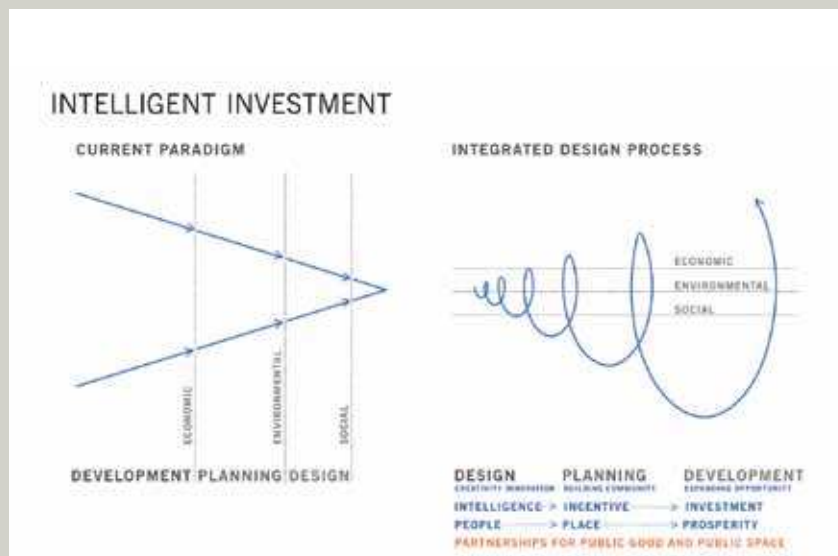
difference to the attractiveness of a place and also to people's self-esteem."

The project has run for a year so far and involved six municipalities: Arjeplog, Jokkmokk, Gällivare, Pajala, Haparanda and Piteå.

"It's been important for us to include people who have a mandate to make decisions. But we've also wanted to create a safe environment so everyone involved can speak their mind and dare to criticise. Every society must find its own identity – the common 'red thread'. And then follow it completely.

"If everything in Arjeplog has the word 'silver' in the name then that must be for a reason. You need to use your history and culture to attract people to you. Dare to be proud of it. What we're doing in our project is not only valid for Norrbotten, it's valid for all rural communities."

Another contribution during the day presented examples of how Stockholm County Council's Healthcare Management has worked together



Above: Service design by Transformator design in collaboration with Stockholm County Council. Left: Laura Lee's "Integrated Design Strategy for South Australia – Building the Future" addresses a number of concrete issues about the environment in South Australia. The report also includes theoretical descriptions of the design methodology which politicians and social planners will presumably use to realise a number of proposed measures. A description of what a user-driven design process looks like compared to a traditional linear one.

with the service design agency Transformator Design to develop e-services for people with mental health issues. Both patients and their relatives took part in the project. The user perspective has been more important than ever and has been an absolute necessity for achieving results.

We also benefited from several international perspectives during the day. *Runa Sabroe* of the Danish state-funded agency MindLab described how service design is regularly used to facilitate the relationship between citizens and the authorities in Denmark (read more about it in Design Research Journal # 2.11, p. 10).

And *Laura Lee* of Carnegie Mellon University, Pittsburgh, USA, described the survey work she was involved in during 2009–10 in South Australia that resulted in a design strategy for the whole region: “An Integrated Design Strategy for South Australia – Building the Future”. The strategy addresses all imaginable aspects: nature, culture, climate changes, housing and industrial development etc. and also focuses on the experiences and participation of the residents – the users.

The panel debate that summed up the topic of “Mission: The User” featured both optimistic and pessimistic overtones. “Isn’t it strange that the user perspective wasn’t taken seriously earlier?” asked someone. “We should have met at the Stockholm Globe Arena and been many, many more people,” said someone else. A third person thought: “It’s happening now. Within the past year, service design has grown at breakneck speed.”

*Daniel Forslund*, head strategist at Vinnova’s department of Services and ICT, argued:



“I believe that user participation is a critical survival factor for all public-sector agencies, services etc. today. Quite simply, we can’t not have it. And that’s a good omen for the future.”

However, to achieve a successful result requires brave decision makers and employees who dare to think in new ways that cut right across previously strict boundaries. The panel could agree on that.

Which leads us back to Marco Steinberg’s introductory talk about a future featuring an ageing population and shrinking state funding.

“If public funding for the healthcare sector, for instance, has to be cut by half, we can’t do it like this,” he said, showing the picture of the car featured here.

“Then it’s about something completely different. Like involving people who are able to think strategically and methodically with other starting points than the old ones. People like designers.”

*Lotta Jonson*

## More “Mission: User”

The event “Mission: The User” in February discussed issues such as “How can an activity work more with user-centred development?” and “How can we use creative processes and create attractive services for more people?” The answers – that is, the presentations and the concluding panel debate – are available at YouTube for everyone who missed the event. This is an excellent way to find out more about the topic of user-driven service design in various sectors. Go to [www.svid.se/uppdraganvandare](http://www.svid.se/uppdraganvandare) to access links to the presentations (except for Laura Lee’s). Her report “Integrated Design Strategy for South Australia – Building the Future” can

be read and downloaded in its entirety at [www.thinkers.sa.gov.au/Thinkers/Lee](http://www.thinkers.sa.gov.au/Thinkers/Lee).



## Global network

OCEAN Design Research Association is the name of a broad network of design researchers around the world. The organisation was formed in London in 1994 and will celebrate its anniversary next year with a series of events. Since 2008 OCEAN has been registered in Norway, with *Michael U Hensel* at AHO as one of its spokespeople:

“All the members work on a non-profit basis and run projects that are close to their hearts. None of us is afraid of complex issues,” he says.

Info at [ocean-designresearch.net](http://ocean-designresearch.net).

## Car design today = maximising intelligence

What's happening on the research front in the automotive industry? The question arose (yet again) during Design Week in Milan in April. At the central location of the Triennale Palace, Renault presented a concept car developed with the help of designer *Ross Lovegrove*. He is known for his environmental interest and fascination with new materials. Of course many of us would be happy to exchange our petrol-driven heap for a Twin'Z but it was definitely not a futuristic breakthrough.

Let us hope that much more research is happening in the car industry than we can see, well hidden behind locked doors. This, despite the fact that many people say nothing radical can happen before petrol prices have risen sky high and/or that the drying up of the fossil fuel supply starts to be noticeable in everyday life.

An article in *Dagens Nyheter* last autumn stated that there are a number

of attempts to create environmentally neutral fuels to replace petrol and diesel. Could green algae be able to manufacture oil? Electric cars still have major problems with the weight of their batteries, which often weigh more than a third of the car's total weight. But science journalist *Karin Bojs* states that Swedish researchers have made a technical breakthrough by turning the entire chassis of the car into a single battery made of carbon fibre. At least in theory, the chassis could then also be able to store energy.

A project called StorAge is currently underway, with funders that include the EU's research fund and the Swedish Foundation for Strategic Research (SSF). Project participants are the Swedish quasi-governmental research institute Swerea SICOMP (which has worked for a long time to develop carbon fibre plastics for aircraft and wind turbines), Imperial College London, INASCO Hellas,

Advanced Composites Group, Nanocyl, the Volvo Car Corporation, Chalmers University of Technology, Germany's Federal Institute for Materials Research and Testing (BAM), ETC Battery and FuelCells Sweden. KTH Royal Institute of Technology and Luleå University of Technology are also apparently involved. The StorAge project is trying to develop structural batteries – ones that are strong, rigid, shapeable and can bear the weight of parts of the vehicle.

The idea is that in future carbon fibre plastics would not be made from fossil coal sources, as they are today, but from cellulose, and that the electricity used to power the cars will come from hydro and wind power. It is a dream worth taking seriously, and one that Ross Lovegrove also wants to see become a reality. However, his Renault has a more traditional construction, with four lithium-ion batteries evenly distributed underneath its floor. It is

## Practical research about goats



PHOTO: THEO ROSENGREN

User-driven design solutions and research about materials etc. must go hand in hand. With this insight, a project called *Goats on Furniture* developed at the Wood Oriented Furniture Design BA level programme at the rural Steneby campus of the University of Gothenburg's School of Design and Crafts (HDK).

*Franz James*, an instructor and one of the project managers, says one of the most important tasks of future

designers is to get out into real life, learn to know the users and not think that they can just sit in their studios and create.

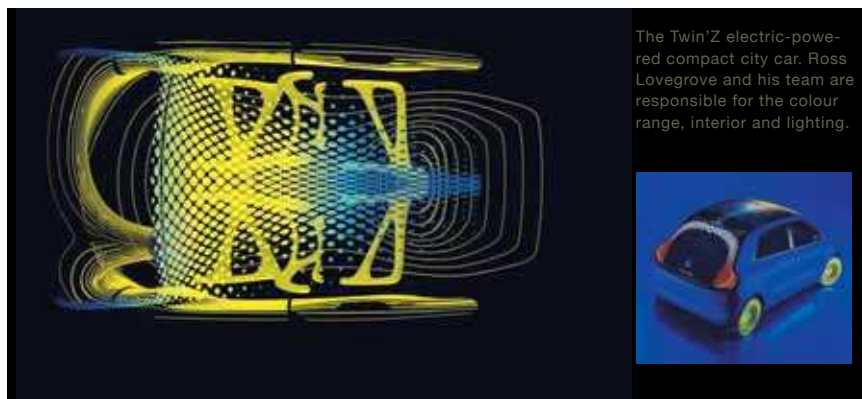
"In future the designer's role will instead focus on social and sustainable design. We must find new ways to interact with the society around us

Mjolk på hjul (Milk on Wheels) is a functioning refrigerator. The container is made of birch wood, has an inner layer of foam insulation, and can store up to 14 litres of milk. Design Love Hultén. Right: Juan Cappa, a student from Columbia, was inspired by the traditional material straw. This is his straw stool, part of the Goats on Furniture project.



PHOTO: THEO ROSENGREN





above all the details of the Twin'Z model that he has been involved with: the bumpers, lighting, interior, etc. Unfortunately it is the aesthetics, especially the organic form of the LED light, that create the high-tech impression.

This is what Lovegrove himself says about the situation:

“The use of composites and recycled materials opens up new opportunities to combine textures and new skin expressions. Mechanical

‘hard’ aesthetics are making way for the biological principles of ‘soft’ aesthetics.... (D)esigning a car no longer consists merely in improving the look and feel of the drive experience. It involves harnessing a new attitude towards how we integrate vehicles into everyday life by reducing harmful emissions, dematerialising the car’s physicality to achieve lightness, and maximising...its efficiency and intelligence.”

Lotta Jonson

in general and our local society in particular. In *Goats on Furniture* we have worked with sustainable design based on local materials. We believe that by only using locally sourced solid wood, we are challenging the furniture industry to promote a more sustainable society while also supporting the local forest industry.”

The project sparked questions about the situation of today’s farmers and the relationship between people and animals. The project grew out of close cooperation with a small local company, DalsSpira, an up-and-coming goat milk dairy that applies craft techniques. The supplier of the goat milk, Näsborn Nöt & Get, has also been involved.

In order to have a future, craft

techniques must be developed and adapted to modern society. This is where the design students became involved. In addition to the instructors at Steneby, designer *Staffan Holm* acted as a sounding board during the project. (He recently received the prestigious Bruno Mathsson Prize for 2013 worth SEK 250,000.)

*Goats on Furniture* resulted in ten unique, practical objects with a poetic visual appearance. Each of them was developed in close collaboration with the users, that is, the workers at the dairy. This is an interesting pedagogical example (with EU support) that incorporates both social and economic parameters. See more at [www.goatsonfurniture.se](http://www.goatsonfurniture.se).

Lotta Jonson

## 18–20 JUNE PIN-C

LAHTI, FINLAND

Theme: *Participation as Performance*.

The 3rd Participatory Innovation Conference, PIN-C, will bring together researchers, artists, designers and practitioners. It combines theories and methods across academic fields that describe how people outside an organisation can contribute to its innovation.

[www.lut.fi/en/pin-c2013/Pages/Default.aspx](http://www.lut.fi/en/pin-c2013/Pages/Default.aspx)

## 2–3 JULY Include Asia 2013

HONG KONG, CHINA

The 2013 International Conference Theme: *Global Challenges and Local Solutions in Inclusive Design*. Include Asia 2013 marks a major international departure for the Include series after six success-ful conferences in London. Now in Hong Kong during Design Week 2013.

[www.hhc.rca.ac.uk/4989/all/1/include-2013.aspx](http://www.hhc.rca.ac.uk/4989/all/1/include-2013.aspx)

## 1–3 JULY ISDRC19 2013

STELLENBOSCH, SOUTH AFRICA

The 19th Annual International Sustainable Development Research Conference aims to promote dialogue of a high quality, building bridges between different research communities, and between research and its applications in society.

[www.isdrc19.co.za](http://www.isdrc19.co.za)

## 3–5 JULY 2013 Design 4 Health Conference SHEFFIELD, UK

This conference seeks to explore the relationship between design, and health and wellbeing. Good design can deliver widespread benefits to society but how can design practice and processes meet the challenges of health and wellbeing in the 21st Century? [www.design4health.org.uk](http://www.design4health.org.uk)

#### 4–5 JULY

##### EKSIG 2013

LOUGHBOROUGH, UK

Theme: *Knowing Inside Out*.

EKSIG (Experiential Knowledge, Expertise And Connoisseurship) is set up by the Design Research Society (DRS) and invites contributions from design, architecture, engineering, craft, music, fine art, philosophy, education, health, cognitive science, gastronomy, professional practice and research etc [www.experientialknowledge.org](http://www.experientialknowledge.org)

#### 18–20 JULY

##### DDR 2013

KUMASI, GHANA

DDR = Design, Development & Research Conference. Theme: *Design Complexities for Development*. On design, development and the role of design research in this context. Key speakers include *Håkan Edeholt* (see p. 9). [www.ddr2013.com.gh](http://www.ddr2013.com.gh)

#### 26–30 AUGUST

##### IASDR 2013

TOKYO, JAPAN

The 5th World Conference on Design Research organisered av IASDR (the International Association of Societies of Design Research). Theme: *Consilience and Innovation in Design*. [www.iasdr2013.jp](http://www.iasdr2013.jp)

#### 3 SEPTEMBER

##### Interact2013

CAPE TOWN, SOUTH AFRICA

Workshop: Participatory Design for Persons with Cognitive or Sensory Impairments. <http://interact2013impairmentworkshop.wordpress.com>

#### 4–6 SEPTEMBER

##### INTERACT 2013

CAPE TOWN, SOUTH AFRICA

INTERACT 2013 is a forum for practitioners and researchers to discuss HCI(Human Computer Interaction). [www.interact2013.org](http://www.interact2013.org)

#### 3–5 SEPTEMBER

##### Research Through Design 2013 DPPI – Designing Pleasurable Products and Interfaces

NEWCASTLE, UK

Research Through Design 2013 is the first and DPPI 2013 the sixth of their kind to bring together designers, artists, psychologists, systems engineers and others to discuss future design practice and design research. [www.praxisandpoetics.org](http://www.praxisandpoetics.org)

#### 4–5 SEPTEMBER

##### CADMC 2013

CAMBRIDGE, UK

Cambridge Academic Design Management Conference. Theme: *Design Management past, present and future*. [www.cadmc.org](http://www.cadmc.org)

#### 5–8 SEPTEMBER

##### Towards Global Histories of Design: Postcolonial Perspectives

AHMEDABAD, INDIA

The first conference convened outside of Europe reflects the increasing importance of design history as a globalised discipline and seeks to utilise postcolonial approaches towards the development of global histories of design. <http://www.dhs-nid2013.in>

#### 24–26 SEPTEMBER

##### GIDEC 2013

GABORONE, BOTSWANA

Gaborone International Design Conference. Theme: Design Future: Creativity, Innovation and Development. [www.gidec2013.com](http://www.gidec2013.com)

#### 8–9 OCTOBER

##### 2013 Design Research Conference (DRC)

CHICAGO, USA

DRC brings together a growing community of design professionals advancing the role of design research

in innovation. Topics include innovative strategies and sustainability in design research. [www.id.iit.edu](http://www.id.iit.edu)

#### 7–9 NOVEMBER

##### Cumulus Dublin Conference 2013

DUBLIN, IRELAND

Theme: *More for less – design in an age of austerity*. Today's global recession forces design practice, research and education to address a number of questions. [www.cumulusdublin.com](http://www.cumulusdublin.com)

#### 15–17 NOVEMBER

##### 2013 IDA

ISTANBUL, TURKEY

Theme: *Design Dialects*. "Design Dialects" is a "metaphor" for conversation and collaboration to enable exchange and creation primarily among the three IDA disciplines that are industrial design, communication design and interior architecture design. [www.idacongress.com/2013istanbul](http://www.idacongress.com/2013istanbul)

#### 16–19 NOVEMBER

##### Healthcare Design 2013

ORLANDO, FLORIDA, USA

The premier event devoted to how the design of responsibly built environments directly impacts the safety, operation, clinical outcomes, and financial success of healthcare facilities. For architects, interior designers, administrators, researchers, industrial designers and others. [www.healthdesign.org/chd/conferences-events/healthcare-design-2013](http://www.healthdesign.org/chd/conferences-events/healthcare-design-2013)

#### 16–18 JANUARI 2014

##### Eighth International Conference on Design Principles and Practices

VANCOUVER, CANADA

Theme: Speaking in grounded ways about the task of design and the use of designed artifacts and processes. <http://designprinciplesandpractices.com/the-conference>

# Confessions of two R&D bureaucrats

We used to equate design and form. Fortunately we are now starting to have our eyes opened to the great possibilities that design and design methodology can offer to research and innovation.

Those of us outside the design profession have regarded design as an aesthetic tool.

In our everyday lives as bureaucrats who fund research, we helped reinforce this picture for many years. Industry-related research often shared a focus on technology. In recent years we are pleased to have had our view changed about this. We are now beginning to perceive the potential that design and design methodology offer the R&D field too.

The first time a project with design research as its theme was suggested to us, we rejected it fairly quickly with the comment that “Surely that’s not research”. The research content and choice of method were not in line with the criteria stipulated by the Research Council of Norway for the selection of projects eligible for funding.

The journey from ignorance to recognition has been a long one: We were first introduced to design methodology linked to product design. The benefit of this was easy to understand. The Live|Work design agency introduced us to service design – how to develop services that meet the needs of their intended users. Service design was quickly added to our project portfolio. For instance, the Oslo School of Architecture and Design (AHO) received

funding for a service design methodology project. We felt that we were back on track. We now also realise that the design of business models has become an important competitive factor for companies that find themselves in a demanding global market. We are doing what we can to keep up.

In the autumn of 2012 we visited the d.school at Stanford University Institute of Design. There we were introduced to yet another dimension: At the d.school people work in a cross-disciplinary way to solve “wicked problems” – that is, large, complex social problems – by taking a comprehensive approach. By using design methodology it is possible to start from people’s needs, make unexpected combinations across disciplines, and quickly test various solutions. Many research projects contain elements of such “wicked problems” but researchers lack the tools to make visible and combine the possibilities and limitations. It is here that researchers and designers can meet up in an interaction between focusing on details and taking a bird’s eye view, and can be good sparring partners for each other.

The design field’s processes and methods lift up innovation projects and help to realize their potential.

The Research Council of Norway currently funds pure design research projects, such as methodology projects in the fields of service and interaction design, via the BIA programme, which stands for User Driven Innovation Arena.

We promote a cross-disciplinary approach. Through our FORNY2020 programme we link up professionally active designers to commercialisation projects in which the project teams initially consist only of researchers and business economists. We also cooperate with the Norwegian Design Council over their Design-driven Innovation Programme (DIP). Our next step will be to include designers in the development of the Research Council’s own programmes and funding systems.

We want to inspire others and work to increase awareness about design and design methodology in the private sector. For example, in April lecturers from such bodies as the d.school and Live|Work shared their experiences with more than 700 participants in the Research Council’s industry day. There we wanted to convey to people that design as a profession and as a field of research are important tools when industry, academia and society are trying to find solutions to complex challenges.

*Lise Våland Sund & Katrine Wyl*



Katrine Wyl (left) Lise Våland Sund (right) are senior advisers at the Norwegian Research Council’s Division for Innovation. Read more about the Research Council on page 11.



Swedish  
Industrial Design  
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Sveavägen 34, 6 tr SE-111 34 Stockholm [www.svid.se](http://www.svid.se)